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REMARKS

ON THE

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

HON. HORACE MANN,

SECRETARY

OF THE

1596.79

Maſſachuſetts Board of Education.

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NOTICE.

The following remarks, suggested by the "Seventh Annual Report" of the Hon. Horace Mann, Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts, were prepared by a committee of the "Association of Masters of the Boston Public Schools," and were read before that body, by whom they are now published. It is hoped they may help in some degree to correct erroneous views and impressions, and thus tend to promote a healthy tone in public sentiment in relation to many things connected with the welfare of our common schools. The teacher, who has stood for many years, "himself against a host" of five or six hundred children from all ranks and conditions of society, thinks he may once ask a hearing before the public. We know that literary and moral amateurs seem very often to repudiate the notion, that "experience is the best schoolmaster." We would not less eschew impatience with such and the great community, than with the children of our charge. We desire no assent to any thing which is not right and reasonable; but being of one mind in regard to great cardinal principles, we shall once, at least, venture "abroad" in their defence. We think it unreasonable to expect that there would be no shades of difference in opinion on some points, nor could it be supposed that so many individuals would perfectly agree in taste about matter and manner of illustration. We have no object in view, but the public good, and for that *all* are willing to yield things of minor consideration.

Many of the best days of our lives have been spent in the service of some of the schools of the commonwealth, and every thing we hold dear and sacred is most deeply connected with their present and future welfare.

BARNUM FIELD, *Franklin School.*
JOSEPH HALE, *Johnson School.*
SAMUEL S. GREENE, *New North School.*
CORNELIUS WALKER, *Wells School.*
WILLIAM D. SWAN, *Mayhew School.*
WM. A. SHEPARD, *Brimmer School.*
A. ANDREWS, *Bowdoin School.*
JAMES ROBINSON, *Bowdoin School.*
WM. J. ADAMS, *Hancock School.*
PETER MACKINTOSH, Jr., *Hancock School.*
SAMUEL BARRETT, *Adams School.*
JOSIAH FAIRBANK, " "
C. B. SHERMAN, *Eliot School.*
LEVI CONANT, " "
AARON D. CAPEN, *Mayhew School.*
FREDERICK CRAFTS, *Hawes School.*
JOHN ALEX. HARRIS, " "
ABNER FORBES, *Smith School.*
ALBERT BOWKER, *Lyman School.*
NATHAN MERRILL, *Franklin School.*
REUBEN SWAN, Jr., *Wells School.*
GEORGE ALLEN, Jr., *Endicott School.*
LORING LATHROP, " "
HENRY WILLIAMS, Jr., *Winthrop School.*
SAMUEL L. GOULD, " "
THOMAS BAKER, *Boylston School.*
CHARLES KIMBALL, " "
JOSHUA BATES, Jr., *Brimmer School.*
BENJ. DREW, Jr., *New North School.*
J. A. STEARNS, *Mather School.*
JONA. BATTLES, Jr., *Mather School.*

Boston, August, 1844.

REMARKS.

THE present age has been peculiarly marked by change and progress in the arts and physical sciences, and in every thing that has received the attention of the public mind. While the artisan and philosopher have been making their successful conquests over time and distance, many lives and much property have been sacrificed to new theories and inexperience. Attempts at reform in education and ethics have been carried, as to things relating to mind and morals, with almost as little caution and reverence, as to matter in the physical sciences. These hints are merely introductory to the following remarks upon the *Seventh Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education.* This document, in all its connection with the interests of education, and in all its bearing upon the reputation and influence of numerous teachers, is one of high importance. This importance is greatly enhanced by the high official station, and the elevated moral and literary character of its author. A sense of duty alone, impels a public expression of distrust in its sentiments, and dissatisfaction with many of its details and representations.

The school system of Massachusetts has ever been the pride and glory of her children. Those Puritan fathers, who founded a university in ten years after they landed upon "New England's rude and rocky shore," also soon established the common schools, to whose influence the present generation are greatly indebted for most of their preëminent civil, social, and religious blessings. Most of those men, who here sustained the burdens in the Indian, French, and Revolutionary wars, could boast of no higher *Alma Mater* than the rude room of some humble farm-house, in which, for a few weeks in each season, were gathered the "flaxen-headed urchins" of the scattered inhabitants. No apology is deemed necessary for the character of the teachers and the poor accommodations of the schools in the Bay State during the first two centuries; the teachers have left behind them monuments which should excite feelings of gratitude, rather than produce those of dissatisfaction.

From the necessity of the case, all the early institutions of the Pilgrims in the wilderness were of slow growth, and, considering all the circumstances of a scattered population upon a rough and barren soil, and the foes with whom they had to contend, from civilized and savage nations, it is astonishing that so soon, "*a little one became a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.*" With all the rude fixtures and other inconveniences for school purposes, an enlightened public sentiment was early formed, which sustained the State legislature in giving hundreds of thousands of dollars to the colleges and other seminaries of learning. After making allowance for the social evils of war and intemperance, the progress of education to the present time seems truly wonderful; and the good cause was *never more prosperous than at the time the Board of Education was formed;* and the establishment of such a body, with little or no opposition, certainly indicated a healthy tone in public sentiment. All the friends of the common schools, from the governor to the most humble citizen, felt a desire to see these institutions *improved*, and their blessings extended to every child in the commonwealth. The desire was for *improvement*, and not for *revolution*, in "that ancient and cherished institution, the common schools of Massachusetts." Little was it expected that, by means of experiments in new doctrines and theories, much reproach would be directly or indirectly thrown upon one class of individuals, who had so long borne the burdens in the great work, for the aggrandizement of another class, who are less modest in their pretensions. But the new measures have become matters of history. A sacrilegious hand was laid upon every thing mental, literary, and moral, that did not conform to the new light of the day. Fulminations of sarcasm and ridicule, from the lecture-room and the press, in essays and speeches, were the forebodings of the new era in the history of common schools, and in the experience of teachers. After Washington had crossed the Delaware, in the darkest hour of the Revolution, congress gave him new power, in consideration of the great work before him; but it seemed that before the teacher could be allowed to go on in his great work of warring against ignorance, idleness, and vice, his authority should be abridged, and all his acquired reputation and influence forfeited, as would be the goods of a contraband trade. All exaggerated accounts of cases in the school discipline of some teachers, and the supposed disqualifications of many others, seemed to be set forth to lessen the authority, influence, and usefulness of teachers, and give a new direction to public sentiment.

From the time of the formation of the city government in the metropolis, after the party feeling that followed the war had subsided, a fresh impulse was given to the interest in the public schools; and the services of such men as Gould, Miles, Bailey, Leverett, and the Emersons, gave a new character to public instruction. The writings of those distinguished educators, Russell and Woodbridge, in the Journal and Annals of Education, and the formation of the American Institute of Instruction, tended greatly to excite a deeper interest in the cause of education, and demand new efforts in the business of teaching. It is believed by many, who have carefully watched all these matters, that the demands were not in vain, in many schools. Gov. Lincoln, the Hon. James

G. Carter, and the Rev. Mr. Gallaudet, were among the first projectors of teachers' seminaries; though it was left for others to carry out their projects in the establishment of Normal schools.

It was in the light of philosophy that Archimedes boasted to the king of Syracuse, if he would give him a place to stand upon, he would move the world;—and in the light of new theories others have attempted to do things equally as impracticable. In matters of education, how vain and worthless have been spasmodic efforts and hot-bed theories, in which the projectors have disregarded experience and observation! Of such vagaries, in the first place, may be mentioned the *infant school system*, which, for a while, was the lion of its day. The fond parent, the philosopher, and the philanthropist, were equally captivated by the scintillations of infantile genius. The doting mother, and the credulous aunt, with rapturous delight told their friends of the rapid progress of the prattling child; and the learned president of a New England college, when he heard the little philosopher say that the *hat*, including the ribbon and buckle, was composed of parts of the three kingdoms of nature, the animal, vegetable, and mineral, remarked that he then saw by what means the world would be converted; and he seemed to think that in Geology, Botany, and Zoology, there would be no farther need of the services of Lyell, Gray, and Audubon; but the object of his mental vision proved an *ignis fatuus*. The sister of a distinguished governor said, the whole affair of infant schools reminded her of those youthful days, when she planted beans in the garden, and soon pulled them up to see if the roots had grown.

Next came Phrenology with all its organs and propensities, rejecting all fear, emulation, and punishments; but in this country its great champions and advocates, who required brick without giving straw, proved to be unworthy disciples of Combe and Spurzheim. They had hardly told the fame and wonders of this new science before they all fell, as in one night, into a mesmeric sleep. There have sprung up, at different times, a great variety of *monitorial* school systems, promising much, but effecting little; and it is hoped, in view of the past, that experience, common sense, and honesty, will soon be increasing in demand. The monitorialist proposed to give, for any number of pupils on one day, as many teachers on the next. Next, the antipodes to the monitorialist, came the *Normalist*, who thinks there will not be good schools in Massachusetts, till all the teachers shall be trained, for a course of years, in some seminary for teachers. No one, who has ever taught and who knows any thing of the teacher's task, will lightly estimate opportunities for improvement of any kind. But it is believed that too much has been claimed for the Normal schools of Massachusetts in their infant state. Such seminaries may be made highly useful in the great work of enlightening the community, but the friends and advocates of such institutions never can exclusively claim the title of educators in free America; others have found, and they ever will find, equal means of doing good, while ignorance, vice, and idleness, prevail in the land. All the principals of the Normal schools, though in a high rank of scholars, were comparatively inexperienced in public school-keeping, when they entered upon their arduous work. They might easily comprehend theories and systems of instruction, and they might explain them to their pupils; but that "practice which makes perfect" can only be acquired by experience and observation amidst the responsible duties of teaching under a variety of circumstances, that can never be really understood in a model school of thirty very young children. The average experience of Normal pupils in such a school, cannot be more than two weeks, which must be regarded as insignificant, by any one who knows much about the variety of circumstances in which teachers are often placed in the discharge of their duties.

It is believed no little injustice has been done to the general character of teachers, by those who have been over-anxious for the reputation and success of the Normal schools. What would be thought of a general who, with a most powerful enemy before him, should publicly announce that his soldiers were weak and inefficient, though they had shown themselves powerful and effective, on great emergencies, in driving the barbarians from the wilderness? Did not Mr. Mann act in such a manner, when, in his early reports, he said much of "incompetent teachers,"—"ignorance of teachers,"—"depressed state of common schools;"—and declared "that the schools were under a sleepy supervision,"—"and that the teachers of the schools,"—"in the absence of all opportunities to qualify themselves,"—"were"—"deeply and widely deficient in the two indispensable prerequisites for their office; namely, a knowledge of the human mind as the subject of improvement, and a knowledge of the means best adapted wisely to unfold and direct its growing faculties;" and, consequently, "*that the common school system of Massachusetts had fallen into a state of general unsoundness and debility?*"

There were persons, throughout the length and breadth of the commonwealth, ready to echo these sentiments; and they did so to the great injury of the *general* influence of teachers. The "irksome task of public instruction" was, of course, made doubly irksome by the loss of confidence in the teacher. It has been well remarked—"The appeal ad invidiam is never powerless. There are always men enough under any government to echo the notes of complaint;" and "whoever would persuade men [or children] that they are not as well governed [or taught] as they might be, shall never want willing hearers." In many places, the parents neither respected, nor did the children reverence, in the least degree, the appointed guardians and instructers of youth, for it had been affirmed, upon the highest authority, that all was rotten in Denmark. Every teacher, in the towns, felt that his burdens were increased by the demands of the age for greater proficiency among his pupils; still, his influence and usefulness were much retarded and greatly abridged; as all had been told that he was "deeply and widely deficient in the two indispensable prerequisites for his office." A spirit of revolution was, consequently, abroad among the people, in relation to the schools which, "for almost two hundred years, had been honored and eulogized by the greatest and best men, who, within all that period, had enlightened and blessed the commonwealth." It seemed that some new law was about to throw these "greatest and best men" into the same relation to the truth, that the discovery of the Copernican system threw those who had believed in that of Ptolemy. A spirit of distrust in teachers was created through the State, before the establishment of the first Normal school. How far the public mind was thus moved in view of such an object, and how far the end justified the means, others must judge.

None but teachers of observation and experience could fully understand the consequences of creating such a "general" distrust in the teachers, who were pronounced "incompetent," and in the system, which was said to be "under a sleepy supervision." What would be the effect upon the usefulness of the medical profession, if the public were informed, in view of some new light of the day, by similar high authority, that the physicians of the country were "incompetent" to their duties, and "deeply and widely deficient in the two indispensable prerequisites of their calling?" It was said, "without fault of their own," the teachers had been in the absence of all opportunities to qualify themselves, which could only be properly enjoyed at the Normal schools. Would it be right and just to say of the ministry of two large and influential denominations of Christians, because they had no theological seminaries, and only one college in New England, that "in the absence of all opportunities to qualify themselves," they were "deeply and widely deficient" in some of the "prerequisites of their office?" Upon the same principle, all religious denominations in this country had an "incompetent" ministry for nearly two hundred years. By such reasoning, the Masons and Websters, who studied the laws and constitution of their country in some village in New Hampshire, must be "incompetent" in the legal profession when compared with the students of Cambridge and Litchfield, who have heard, perhaps, many principles explained in mock trials; and further, without irreverence, Paul, who was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, was less competent "to reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," than is the student from a New England divinity school.

There has ever been something unique in the individual character of the inhabitants of New England; and one who has written much upon the subject of education, well described this peculiarity when he said: "A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who *teams it*, *farms it*, *peddles*, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always, like a cat, falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of your city dolls. He walks abreast with his days, and feels no shame in not studying a profession, for he does not postpone his life, but lives already." Self-reliance in the discharge of duty, and tact in emergency, are worth more than all the untried theories in the world; and it may be said, without any disparagement to literary and professional advantages, that the individual who depends most upon his own judgment and exertions under every variety of circumstances, generally excels in his undertakings.

It was justly said by some one, that the man who undertook to teach others before he had informed himself, deserved "literary crucifixion." It needs no argument to prove that a person cannot well teach what he does not fully understand himself; but with an "aptness to teach," and requisite literary qualifications, one will succeed in proportion to his good judgment, benevolence, energy, and fidelity. Without such qualifications, no Normal school can make a good teacher; and with them, experience alone can give one a high rank for usefulness and success. But it may be said, that new light in morals and metaphysics, like the discovery of the law of gravitation in philosophy, was destined to produce a new era in the cause of learning; and the Normal school was to be the Propaganda from which this new light was to be irradiated for the advancement of the moral and intellectual welfare of coming generations. It is thought no exaggeration to say such was the expectation of some. As facts will be called for, the views of a few individuals most engaged in advancing and sustaining the Normal schools must be given. The quotations, though few and short, will be acknowledged to be of the highest authority on this subject. They are as follow: Dr. Howe, of the Asylum for the Blind, said of his own school: "We need none of the stimuli which by some are supposed necessary. We have no corporal punishments, no prizes, no taking precedence in classes, no degradations. Emulation there is and will be; nature provides for this in the self-esteem of each individual." The president of the American Institute of Instruction said: "There is no other so ready a way, I repeat it, to produce falsehood in a child as to doubt his word. And it must be so. A doubter is a liar. One who was himself perfectly true could never suspect. It is true, that there is a distrust produced by the experience of other men's falsehoods. But this belongs to the world. It cannot be felt by a teacher towards a child." Mr. Pierce, the first principal of the Normal school at Lexington, said: "And here I would state that my theory goes to the entire exclusion of the premium and emulation system, and of corporal punishment." It is hard to conceive of any thing more *radical* and less *conservative*, than such views, when considered in connection with the administration of all the institutions of New England, during the last two centuries. Nothing can be more at war with approved principles. The soundness of these principles must be discussed more at large in another place. Is it uncharitable to suppose that Dr. Howe and the President of the Institute, with their peculiar views, would look with more than parental fondness and indulgence upon the *results* of Mr. Pierce's experiment at the Lexington Normal school? The public ought not to complain of this fondness and indulgence, unless they were shown at the unjust expense of those who had long and faithfully borne the heat and burdens of the day, and who still had a great work to perform. Invidious comparisons generally have but one object and tendency.

In a short time after the establishment of the Normal school at Lexington, it was visited by Dr. Howe, of the Asylum for the Blind, of whom Mr. Mann afterwards said, it is owing "to his judgment, his knowledge, and the energy of his benevolent impulses," "that the institution over which he presides has enjoyed such an unexampled degree of prosperity, as to be accounted throughout the civilized world the first of its kind." This praise from Mr. Mann seemed due to Dr. Howe, who had *before* said, in a letter to a friend, published in the *Common School Journal:* "It has been in my power to examine many schools in this country, and in various parts of the world, but I am free to declare that, in my opinion, the best school I ever saw in this or any other country is the Normal school at Lexington." "I prefer it, because the system is based upon the principles that the young mind hungers and thirsts for knowledge, as the body does for food; because it makes the pupils not merely recipients of knowledge, but calls all their faculties into operation to attain it themselves; and, finally, because, relying upon the higher and nobler parts of the pupil's nature, it rejects all addresses to bodily fears, and all appeals to selfish feelings." "To me, sir, it was delightful to see that they were becoming acquainted with the nature of the children's minds, before they undertook to manage them; and that they would not, like other teachers, have to learn at the children's expense." "Perhaps, sir, you, like myself, may have *suffered*, in boyhood, under some usher, who was learning his trade by experimenting upon you, as the barber's apprentice learns to shave upon the chins of his master's less-favored customers.” The president of the Institute also visited the school, with Dr. Howe, and remarked: “Yet I am confident, from what I saw of their modes of teaching, that those individuals will show the effects of those few weeks of special instruction, all the remainder of their lives. They can never teach in the blind and lifeless way in which thousands of elementary schools are taught.” No remarks could have harmonized better with the secretary's views if they had been made “to order,” after what he had said about the “general unsoundness and debility” of the “Common School System of Massachusetts,” and about the teachers being “deeply and widely deficient in the two indispensable prerequisites for their office.” There is not the least desire to detract from the literary merits of the Normal schools, nor from the high character and reputation of any of these gentlemen; still, it is confidently believed, that the latter are laboring under several mistakes of a practical and theoretical nature. These Normal pupils could not have made such proficiency as to constitute the “best school” “in this or any other country,” “in a few weeks,”† without much previous discipline and instruction. In theorizing in matters of education, men always select pupils of the best minds and morals, and they seem to forget that the “irksome task of public instruction” is among the great mass of the population. A common school is often a world in miniature. Within the same walls there are often the children of the rich and the poor, the idle and industrious, the moral and immoral. The diversity of the inhabitants of the burial places near Constantinople, “whom death has continued to mow down for near four centuries, in the vast capital of Islamism,” as described in Anastasius, is not greater than what sometimes exists among the parents of the children in one of the cities or large towns. The United States has long been an asylum for the whole human family, and consequently, there are sometimes collected in the same school, children who have come from all parts of the world, and who have the

† See Common School J. 1844. P.

greatest diversity of character to be assimilated, before peace and harmony can well reign among the "sovereign" people.

Had that "distinguished writer and educator," the president of the American Institute, ever known by experience, any thing of the trials of many teachers, he would not have made such withering comparisons between *theory* under the most favorable circumstances at the Normal school, which he had seen, and "the blind and lifeless way," in practice, "of thousands of elementary schools," which he had not seen. The truth of the assertion, that "a doubter" of a child's word "is a liar," can only be admitted by the teacher out of "the world," if any dependence can be put upon the evidence of some of the most prominent of the "five senses," which Mr. Mann says, "about twenty years ago, the teachers in Prussia made the important discovery that children have." Besides, it is thought, the sentiment that distrust "cannot be felt by a teacher towards a child," is inconsistent with the later views of the same individual, as expressed in that valuable work, "The School and Schoolmaster," where he says, "children are made liars by the examples set them from their earliest days. They are coaxed by falsehood, by what are called white lies, to get up and to go to bed; to go to play and to give up their playthings; to give up food and take medicine. They are even coaxed by falsehood into being good!"

Mr. Pierce, of the Normal school, has somewhere said: "Teachers create difficulties themselves, and then ask what they shall do with them without the rod. *They do not know the depths of the human heart.*" Without reference to the theological point which is here brought into view, or the phrenological principle of self-esteem, or the non-resistance doctrine of no corporal punishment,—the teacher must take the world as he finds it. His labors have certainly been increased, and his usefulness and influence have been greatly diminished, by the new notions of modern times. Notwithstanding, it was found, that "a large majority of the young ladies" of the Lexington Normal school, under Mr. Pierce, "were of opinion, that it [the rod] should not be resorted to in any case," experience, philanthropy, and wisdom, still dictate the necessity of its use, or of the *right* to use it. It will be perceived, from the sentiments of Mr. Pierce and some of the friends of the Normal schools and the *results* of instruction, that views entirely *radical* are characteristic of the institution. The State seal gives these new doctrines an importance and consideration with some persons, which otherwise they might not possess. The public mind has been so far poisoned, that great distrust is felt in all teachers of the *old* school. Already, in the metropolis, have members of the School Committee been importuned to "come out" against corporal punishment, and to give their influence for "non-resistance," and "no government," which are synonymes of "anti-corporal punishment." One gentleman inquired, if it was believed that the city schools could be well managed upon the "come out" plan; and the reply was, that they probably could not be, by the *present* teachers; but, it was thought they could be by others — [Normalites!!!] Mr. Mann's account of the Prussian schools, was cited in confirmation of such an opinion. By visionary notions of untried theories, and hearsay and false testimony respecting the general conservative practices of two hundred years, and by an esprit du corps characteristic of all violent reforms, much mischief has been effected, and much good prevented. Personalities, and impeachment of motives, are here entirely disclaimed; still it must be admitted that the evil is no less when the torch is applied by the deluded "monomaniac," than when the fire is the work of the midnight incendiary. It is believed that many of the new experiments have proved failures, as shown by impartial testimony; and that too much has been claimed in official reports for the comparative success of the Normal schools. There have been cases of failure among those sent out from these schools. A clerical gentleman of the highest respectability, from the centre of the commonwealth, says: "A comparison between the students from Leicester Academy, and those from the Normal school at Barre, in the examination of qualifications, or upon trial, would be much in favor of the former institution; and many from Barre have failed in examination, and some upon trial." Such accounts are coming from various parts of the State. An extract from the report of the School Committee of the ancient town of Yarmouth, shows the statements on this subject are not made without good authority. That report says: "In relation to the selection of efficient teachers, the committee are at a loss to know what course to recommend. They found those who came highly recommended from our first seminaries of learning, as deficient in a knowledge of elementary principles, as those whose advantages of education have been limited to the public schools, and were compelled to withhold their approbation from an applicant who had been educated at one of the Normal schools; and who came with testimonials of competence from the teacher of that institution. To the Normal schools, the committee had been accustomed to look with confidence, as the source from whence we were soon to be supplied with teachers, who had not only been prepared in the subjects which they were to teach; but had also been instructed in the best method of imparting that knowledge to others. But, if such candidates are permitted to leave the institution with the sanction of its officers, there is reason to apprehend, that their influence will be productive of more evil than good, by lulling to rest the vigilance of committees; and, unless the Board of Education are more careful to select officers who are more thorough in their course of instruction, and more conscientious in their recommendations, the whole project might as well be given up, and the State preserved from what is otherwise a useless expense."

Persons sometimes place themselves in such a position, that they cannot well judge impartially; and Mr. Mann has said, "men are generally very willing to modify, or change their opinions and views, while they exist in thought merely, but, when once formally expressed, the language chosen often becomes the mould of the opinion. The opinion fills the mould, but cannot break it and assume a new form." May it not be in accordance with such a principle, that Dr. Howe, before the American Institute, in 1841, defended the Normal schools in Massachusetts, with more than gladiatorial ardor; he having before spoken of the school at Lexington in this manner: it is "the best school I ever saw, in this or any other country." And does Mr. Mann wish to be made an exception to his own rule; when, in his seventh annual report, on his return from Europe, he says: "I have seen no Institution for the blind, equal to that under the care of Dr. Howe, at South Boston;" which Mr. Mann had before pronounced "the first of its kind" "throughout the civilized world." The Hon. Secretary cannot complain, if those, of whom he expressed such unfavorable opinions before he went "to some new quarter of the horizon" for "a brighter beam of light," avail themselves in self-defence of his own rules to preserve their influence; and to avert what otherwise might cause them to suffer, from his sarcastic lash, in his unjust comparisons between them and teachers in some of the countries of Europe.

The Hon. Secretary often alludes to his acquaintance with men, and he seems to understand their principles of action; and he well knows that individuals are slow to change their opinions respecting a subject, upon which they stand fully committed. In legislative bodies, and among other associations of public men, the character of reports, upon interesting subjects, may be generally anticipated with a great degree of certainty, by those who understand the views, or party bias of the individual to whom they are referred. Though Mr. Mann may eschew party feeling, and previous opinions in the examination of all subjects, as he does a spirit of *emulation* among the young; still, it is thought, that he may possess some of the infirmities of other men; and that even the emulous youth at school, might innocently remind him of the fable of the crab and his son. The secretary has often repudiated the general principle of emulation, and in his seventh annual report, he is clearly understood, in some places, to express strong views of its odious tendency, and to appeal to its influence in others. In speaking of the Prussian and Saxon schools, he says, "emulation had been found an adverse, and not favoring influence," and "the best authorities throughout the country were discountenancing, rather than encouraging it;" and, in connection with the same subject, he inquires, "Ought we then to cultivate this passion, [love of approbation,] already of inordinate growth, by the use of emulation in our schools?" Had the secretary forgotten that in a former part of his document, "the town of BRIGHTON" stood "at the head of all the towns in the Commonwealth, in regard to the liberality of its appropriations for the support of schools," and that "the town of Dana," which stood "at the foot of the list," had "resigned its place at the bottom of the catalogue, to the town of Pawtucket." Is not here a strong appeal to the principle of emulation in putting "head" in such antithesis with "foot" and "bottom," and in placing such emphasis on "BRIGHTON," at the expense of poor "Dana" and "Pawtucket"?

It is not known that Mr. Mann had ever given much attention to the common school system, or that he had been in any way very active, in the great cause of common schools, before his appointment as Secretary of the Board. With little practical knowledge, and without any fixed notions founded upon experience and observation, it is not strange, perhaps, that he did injustice to the school system, which had long been justly regarded as the glory of the commonwealth. Had Mr. Mann ever extended a warm sympathy to the public teachers; or had he ever taken an interest with those who formed, and, for a long time, sustained the American Institute of Instruction; he might have put a higher estimate upon institutions at home, and been less ready fully to commit himself to the theory of those abroad, before seeing them. In the secretary's second annual report, after his great disparagement of committees, teachers, and the condition of the school system of Massachusetts, he says: "To expect that a system, animated only by a feeble principle of life, and that life in irregular action, could be restored at once to health and vigor, would be a sure preparation for disappointment. It is now twenty years, since the absolute government of Prussia, under the impulse of self-preservation, entered upon the work of entirely remodelling their common schools, so as to give them a comprehensiveness and an efficacy, which would embrace and educate every child in the kingdom. In this undertaking, high intelligence has been aided, at every step, by unlimited power; and yet the work is but just completed." Since Mr. Mann had previously, in a most emphatic manner, condemned so many things in Massachusetts; and, since his favorite beau ideal, as he thinks, characterized at least the Prussian system, the following extracts from his "seventh annual report," upon his return from Europe, though severe in the extreme, contain such views as might have been expected. Whether his views are just or unjust, the public must judge after a proper examination of the case. The secretary's report says:

> "For the six years during which I have been honored with an appointment to the office of Secretary of the Board of Education, I have spared neither labor nor expense in fulfilling not only that provision of the law which requires that 'the secretary shall collect information,' but also that injunction, not less important, that he shall 'diffuse as widely as possible, throughout every part of the commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the education of the young.' For this purpose I have visited schools in most of the free States and in several of the slave States of the Union; have made myself acquainted with the different laws relative to public instruction which have been enacted by the different legislatures of our country, have attended great numbers of educational meetings, and, as far as possible, have read whatever has been written, whether at home or abroad, by persons qualified to instruct mankind on this [?] momentous subject. Still, I have been oppressed with a painful consciousness of my inability to expound the merits of this [?] great theme, in all their magnitude and variety, and have turned my eyes again and again to some new quarter of the horizon, in the hope that they would be greeted by a brighter [?] beam of light. Under

these circumstances, it was natural that the celebrity of institutions in foreign countries should attract my attention, and that I should feel an intense desire of knowing whether, in any respect, those [?] institutions were superior to our own; and, if any thing were found in them worthy of adoption, of transferring it for our improvement.

"Accordingly, early last spring, I applied to the Board for permission to visit Europe, *at my own expense*, during the then ensuing season, that I might make myself personally acquainted with the nature and workings of their [?] systems of public instruction,—especially in those countries which had long enjoyed the reputation of standing at the head of the cause." [?]—pp. 18 and 19.

"Among the nations of Europe, Prussia has long enjoyed the most distinguished reputation for the excellence of its schools. In reviews, in speeches, in tracts, and even in graver works devoted to the cause of education, its schools have been exhibited as models for the imitation of the rest of Christendom."—p. 21.

"Perhaps I saw as fair a proportion of the Prussian and Saxon schools, as one would see of the schools in Massachusetts, who should visit those of Boston, Newburyport, Lexington, New Bedford, Worcester, Northampton and Springfield."—p. 70.

"Actual observation alone can give any thing approaching to the true idea. I do not exaggerate when I say that the most active and lively schools I have ever seen in the United States, must be regarded almost as dormitories, if compared with the fervid life of the Scotch schools; and, by the side of theirs, our pupils would seem to be hybernating animals just emerging from their torpid state, and as yet but half conscious of the possession of life and faculties. It is certainly within bounds to say, that there were six times as many questions put and answers given, in the same space of time, as I ever heard put and given in any school in our own country."—p. 62.

"Nor is this all. The teacher does not stand immovably fixed to one spot, (I never saw a teacher in Scotland sitting in a school-room,) nor are the bodies of the pupils mere blocks, resting motionless in their seats, or lolling from side to side as though life were deserting them."—p. 64.

"While attending to the recitation of one, his mind is constantly called off, to attend to the studies and conduct of all the others. For this, very few teachers amongst us, have the requisite capacity; and hence the idleness and the disorder that reign in so many of our schools,—excepting in cases where the debasing motive of fear puts the children in irons."—p. 84.

"A teacher who cannot answer all the questions and solve all the doubts of a scholar as they arise, must assume an awful and mysterious air, and must expound in oracles, which themselves need more explanation than the original difficulty." — p. 128.

"Do we not need a new spirit in our community, and especially in our schools, which shall display only objects of virtuous ambition before the eyes of our emulous youth; and teach them that no height of official station, nor splendor of professional renown, can equal in the eye of heaven, and of all good men, the true glory of a life consecrated to the welfare of mankind?" — p. 83.

"I speak of the teachers whom I saw, and with whom I had more or less of personal intercourse; and, after some opportunity for the observation of public assemblies or bodies of men — I do not hesitate to say, that if those teachers were brought together, in one body, I believe they would form as dignified, intelligent, benevolent-looking a company of men as could be collected from the same amount of population in any country." — p. 127.

These quotations are made to give the reader a clear, general view of the object of the secretary's visit abroad, and the result of his comparisons. The secretary having designated "*Boston*," as one of the places in Massachusetts, in comparison with those he visited in Prussia, the inquiry is at once made, what does Mr. Mann know of the present state of the public "Grammar and Writing Schools" of Boston? With one voice, the answer is, *he knows comparatively nothing*. It is not known to any of the masters that the secretary has improved any opportunity, within five years, of knowing any thing of the views of the Boston teachers, or any thing of their plans, or the results of their instruction. It will be seen, that Mr. Mann has alluded to "the law which requires" that "the secretary shall collect information" and "diffuse as widely as possible throughout *every* part of the commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the education of the young." Though the secretary speaks in some of his annual reports of holding meetings in *all* the fourteen counties, still the teachers in Boston never *heard* of more than one such meeting in Suffolk, and that was held six or seven years ago; and it is difficult for them to understand how Mr. Mann could have "collected" or "diffused" any information in Suffolk, unless it was done by some mesmeric process of which they know nothing.

It may not be improper nor immodest to say that the Boston teachers, not receiving the sympathy and diffusive light which have been so profusely extended to other parts of the State, have done what they could among themselves to encourage each other, and to "collect and diffuse" such information as would best tend to advance the welfare of the schools committed to their charge. Many of these teachers have enjoyed all the literary advantages of the college, or the university; others have had opportunities, perhaps not less valuable; and all have had much experience. They have not forgotten the apostolic injunction, and have frequently "assembled themselves together;" and though it may not be said that "they would form as dignified, intelligent, benevolent-looking a company of men as could be collected," still they have tried faithfully to discharge their duty, and have exerted themselves to advance the great cause of public instruction. Within the two years previous to the time that Mr. Mann made his late report, there have been delivered, by the members, before the Association of Public Teachers of Boston, lectures on the following subjects: "On Different Systems of English Grammar;" "Mechanical Teaching;" "Elementary Principles of Reading;" "Analysis of the Human Voice;" "Tones, Inflections, and Sentimental Expressions of correct Reading;" "Thorough Instruction;" "The Influence of Teaching upon the Teacher's Mind;" "Legal and moral Obligations of the Teacher;" "A Day in the Schools of Lowell;" "Literary and moral Qualifications of Teachers;" "The Teacher's Task;" "The comparative Rank and Usefulness of Teachers;" "The Principles of Analysis in teaching English Grammar;" "School Discipline;" "Duties and Obligations of Parents to Pupils and Teachers;" "The Use of Moral Suasion in Discipline;" "The Routine of School Exercises;" "Half a Day in School." Besides these lectures, several reports have been made, and many discussions have been held on subjects connected with the business of teaching.

The Prussian school system is thought to be a proper "model for the imitation of the rest of Christendom," and the secretary complains that the "traveller, Laing, has devoted several chapters" to its "disparagement," as he does not *believe* that Laing "had ever visited the schools" he "presumed to condemn." It is *known* by the Boston teachers that the Hon. Secretary has not, for several years, visited their schools, and that he knows nothing, by observation, to warrant his disparagement of them, in common with others, at the present time. Should Mr. Mann say that a few visits to the *school-houses*, soon after his original appointment as secretary, and, perhaps, an occasional one since, were sufficient upon which to predicate his remarks, every experienced teacher will dissent from all decisions founded on such testimony. It may be seen that the secretary makes hasty statements and comparisons upon matters abroad and at home. His most partial friends must admit the correctness of this assertion. The *North American Review** says of his "seventh report:" "It has some defects of arrangement, and some faults of style; and the shortness of the time during which Mr. Mann was abroad, has occasioned some mistakes. Several assertions are too unqualified."

An able correspondent of the Mercantile Journal says, that he is "apprehensive" that Mr. Mann's "remarks on the instruction of the deaf and dumb in Holland, Prussia, and Saxony, are too sweeping, and may lead to incorrect impressions." This writer, who seems a perfect master of his subject, thinks "it would not be at all surprising if even a gentleman of Mr. Mann's intelligence, laboring under the disadvantages of having no practical acquaintance with deaf mute instruction, and, perhaps, not even acquainted with the history and extensive literature of the science, should form hasty and erroneous conclusions on a subject for the most part, if not altogether, new to him." Charity for the secre-

* April, 1844

tary's want of "*practical acquaintance*" is often needed with its ample mantle, amid the fog and mystification which he seems to throw over matters of a practical nature connected with the great subject of public instruction.

The secretary has a chapter upon music in the *Prussian* schools; still it is not known to the teachers of music in the Boston schools, that Mr. Mann was ever present to hear the singing exercises in a half-hour's lesson in these schools. He says, "in *Germany*, where the blind, like all other classes of society, are taught music very thoroughly, I saw a common mode of performance on the organ which is very unusual in America. The organs were constructed with a set of keys for the feet; so that the feet could always play an accompaniment to the hands." There are more than fifty such organs in churches within sight of the State-house, in Boston, though Mr. Mann says they are "unusual in America."

Mr. Mann's account makes the teachers and pupils of the schools in Prussia and Scotland, "giants," and those of Massachusetts, "pigmies" in comparison. Our schools, he says, "must be regarded almost as dormitories," and "our pupils would seem to be hybernating animals," by the side of those of Scotland. With great apparent surprise, the secretary does "not hesitate to say," that "those teachers whom he saw in Prussia were as dignified, intelligent, benevolent-looking a company of men as could be collected from the same amount of population in any country." The Prussian and Scotch teachers seem to be all Newtons, Melancthons, Oberlins, and Mozarts, when compared with the David Gamuts, Dominie Sampsons, Ichabod Cranes, and old Squeerses, that the secretary had seen in Massachusetts.

It must not be denied that among the great amount of matter in the secretary's report, there are many interesting statements and disinterested remarks; but in many of his reflections upon some of the institutions and citizens of the country, it is thought that he is not less severe than Madam Trollope herself. The secretary often admits the excellence of the Massachusetts free schools, but he thinks they were "dormitories" when he first assailed their "sleepy supervision," and the only legitimate inference to be drawn is, that without his agency, all, ere this time, would have been in a state of dilapidation and decay. But such insinuations should not be made without the proof of their correctness, which must be given. Mr. Mann seems to have formed a most unfavorable opinion of the state of education in many parts of England. In his Common School Journal, he says: "Let any one read the reports of the English Factory Commissioners and Factory Inspectors, and he will say that the Fejee Islanders, the Caribs, or the most ferocious tribes of cannibals that prowl in the interior of Africa, thousands of miles from the confines of civilization, ought to send missionaries to England, to raise, if possible, the English manufacturer to their own level of humanity." In his reference to the present deplorable state of things in England, in "consequence of having no national system" of education, he says: "These facts are full of admonition to us, for this is the state of things towards which, *eight years ago*, [?] we were rapidly tending." The inference is obvious, that the secretary thinks he has saved Massachusetts from sinking to that deplorable depth, so far below the "level of humanity" enjoyed by the Carib, the Fejee, and the cannibal. Such intimations have before been given, and the secretary, in his fifth annual report, seems to date the advance of teachers' wages, the increase of the length of schools, and the improved discipline, from 1837, when he made his "first annual report." But it is thought there were other causes that tended greatly to produce such results, which he did not duly consider and acknowledge. The increase of population within the same territorial limits, of course, would naturally increase the number of annual schools, and, consequently, the average length of the whole number of schools; and the growing prosperity, between the year 1837 and the year 1842, would also naturally augment the amount paid to teachers. The temperance reform has also had an undoubted influence in promoting the prosperity of the common schools. In improving school discipline, in promoting punctuality, and in effecting the needed supply of clothing and books for children, the labors of the temperance philanthropists have been paramount in the last seven years. Many of the active theorists in the cause of education have been so visionary and impracticable that they have done comparatively little good, and, in some respects, they have done not a little harm. It is considered "censurable" that "the friends of the Secretary of the Board of Education are endeavoring to convey the impression that upon his exertions, mainly, depends the existence and prosperity of our common schools. This is great injustice to the five or six generations of patriots who have descended to their graves, and to whom we are really indebted for this great boon." It is justly claimed, and confidently believed, that "we always have had, and we always shall have, good common schools in Massachusetts, whether we have a Board of Education or no."

It was not the design of these remarks to make any reference to the Board of Education, but their secretary having, through his report, given the good citizens of Boston such reasons to be dissatisfied with their schools, a defence seems imperiously demanded from some source, and were the teachers to remain silent, it might well be supposed they have neither the qualifications of teachers, nor the feelings of *men*, and it seems that the secretary must have supposed them destitute of both, or he would not have so trifled with public credulity. It cannot be denied, and probably will not be, that it was intended to include Boston among the places, "where the debasing motive of fear puts the children in irons;" and where the schools "must be regarded almost as dormitories;" the pupils as "hybernating animals"—"mere blocks, resting motionless in their seats, or lolling from side to side, as though life were deserting them;" and where the teachers "stand immovably fixed to one spot;" and who, from ignorance, "assume an awful and mysterious air, and must expound in oracles which themselves need more explanation than the original difficulty;" and who are consequently worse than the dumb idols that cannot speak. "Boston" is not only mentioned in connection with the "fair proportion" of "Prussian and Saxon schools" visited, but it is the place of the secretary's official residence, and where all his official documents are issued. Who, at home or abroad, will not think of the metropolis, when they read the secretary's *reflections* upon the teachers and schools of Massachusetts? Mr. Mann says, the traveller, Laing, knows nothing of the Prussian schools, but *he* does; and it is now said with equal boldness, that the Hon. Secretary knows comparatively nothing of the schools of Boston, but others *do* know much; and to them, and their testimony, an appeal in the defensive must be made. Such an appeal is much needed to prevent the corrosive influence of the secretary's sarcasms.

From the days of Mayor Quincy to the present time, the Boston public school system has received the constant attention, and been under the vigilant supervision of some of the most philanthropic citizens and distinguished scholars. Besides the seven distinguished mayors, who have been honored with a reëlection, and who have exercised more than a parental watchfulness over the school children of the city, such men as Shaw, Savage, Pickering, Sumner, Bowdoin, Hale, and Curtis, of the legal profession; Warren, Hayward, Adams, Farnsworth, Stevenson, and M'Kean, of the medical; Pierpont, Wisner, Barrett, Gannett, Knowles, Croswell, Lathrop, and Streeter, of the clerical, have been among the enrolled and enlightened guardians of the city public schools. These names, with a host of others not less worthy that might be given, are sufficient to show that the Boston schools, at least, have not been under a "sleepy supervision." It may be confidently asserted, and, in the *defensive* with due modesty, that, under the guidance of such men, the schools in general have not been in the least behind other institutions in the community. Such an assertion is warranted by the uniform opinion of the most competent judges who have fostered the system, and of impartial and disinterested witnesses who have had sufficient opportunity to understand the principles of instruction and discipline, which wise, judicious, and experienced men have directed and encouraged the teachers to pursue, regardless of visionary notions and utopian theories.

James Stewart, Esq., of England, a distinguished traveller, while in this country, (in 1829,) visited some of the city schools, and in his "*Three Years in North America*," he says, "The richer classes at Boston formerly very generally patronized teachers of private schools, who were paid in the usual way; but they now find that the best teachers are at the head of public schools, and, in most cases, prefer them; the children of the highest and lowest rank enjoying the privileges altogether invaluable in a free state, of being educated together." Now if this tourist was correct in his statements, is it reasonable to suppose that "*eight years ago*" we were rapidly tending to the deplorable condition of things in England, as described by Mr. Mann, and which he says, "is the natural consequence of having no national system?" This traveller further remarks: "I had opportunities while I remained in the neighborhood of Boston, of becoming acquainted with several of the masters, and their modes of teaching, and I believe there are nowhere better instructors to be found. Mr. *****, the teacher of the —— free school, and instructor of Mrs. P——'s daughters, — both of whom are well educated, one of them particularly so; indeed, as well-informed a young woman as is usually found in the upper orders in Britain, — invited us to his school, where we had ample proofs of the attention paid to the children, and of their acquirements. Their general knowledge, and the celerity with which questions of some difficulty in mental arithmetic were solved, surprised us. The progress of the females was especially remarkable."

Many competent witnesses might be produced to show that the improvement and proficiency in these schools have been in accordance with the onward movement of the times. The Hon. Samuel A. Eliot, who was many years a member of the Boston School Committee, and three years Chairman of the Board, ever exerted a watchful eye over every thing connected with the physical, intellectual, and moral welfare of the rising generation; and it was by his influence, through an able report, that the subject of the ventilation of the school-rooms here first received due attention, and that the physical comfort and the health of the children were greatly promoted, in breathing a better atmosphere. It was also mainly by his influence, that instruction in music was so successfully introduced. Mr. Eliot's services were commenced more than "*eight years ago*," and at a much earlier period than the time at which some have supposed reform was begun. In 1834, after a critical examination of all the grammar schools, Mr. E. made the annual report, and the citizens of Boston cannot have better evidence of the state of the schools at that time, than may be found in his remarks. He then said: "The general condition of the schools, both in regard to discipline and instruction, is highly gratifying. So far as the committee are enabled to judge by their recent examination, the discipline of the schools is precisely what is most desirable, that mixture of firmness and kindness which is, at once, highly honorable to the instructors, and productive of the best effects upon the children. The committee have no occasion to qualify this remark or make any exception to it, with reference to any one of the schools; the same system is pursued by all, and apparently with equally beneficial effects. It is hoped that the perseverance of the masters will secure to them a similar commendation in future years. With regard to the kind, and amount of instruction, also, the committee perceived, as they thought, a much nearer approach to equality than usual. Substantially, the same methods are observed in all the schools, and the differences in the results are such only as are presumed to be unavoidable, as well from the different powers of the pupils, as from the various applications of the same principles by different masters."

The Hon. Jonathan Chapman, the successor of Mr. Eliot in the mayor's chair, who was justly celebrated for his almost intuitive perceptions of the public welfare, after two years' official observation, remarked, in his third inaugural address, in 1842: "Our schools continue to maintain their wonted character, and to show themselves worthy of the deep interest that is felt in them by the government, and the ample provisions made for their support."

The Hon. Martin Brimmer, who had been a distinguished member of the city government before he was elected to the office of mayor, in his first annual address, thus notices the public schools: "If there are any institutions of which our fellow-citizens may be justly proud, they are our public schools; and to them the credit is due, since, from the earliest time, they have seen the immense importance of a sound education for their children, and have never hesitated cheerfully to pay the tax requisite to accomplish it. Taken at the tender age of four years, the son of the poor but respectable individual may be advanced through all the steps of the primary and grammar schools, to the high school, where his mind may be imbued with the higher branches of an English education; or, if it is preferred, he may receive, at our excellent Latin school, a *thorough* preparation for any university in the country. Can any system be more beautiful? Can any practice be more republican? Happy the people whose sons and whose daughters may be well instructed at the public charge; and happy, thrice happy that community, all of whose children shall receive a physical, moral, and religious education, to the glory of God, and the service of the state."

There could be no better exponent of the opinions and views of the School Committee, as to the efficiency and value of the school system, than the expressed sentiments of such presiding officers; and if any thing can be wanting to form a climax to the sentiments of the chief magistrates of the city, already quoted, it may be found in the last address of the present mayor, whose philanthopy and interest in the cause of public instruction, have led the School Committee to associate his name with one of the institutions of the city, so that for centuries he will be known as the friend and patron of the schools of Boston and the whole commonwealth. Mr. Brimmer says: "The last subject to which I propose to draw your attention is the condition of our public schools, which, it is believed, was never more satisfactory than at the present time. Under the instruction of able and faithful instructors, the progressive improvement of the schools is, from year to year, clearly perceptible. This improvement is attributable to the high order of principal and assistant instructors in the several schools; to the improved condition and better preparation of the children on admission from the primary schools; and to the increased interest which the parents take in the public schools, and in the education of their children."

"At no time has the importance of our school system been more fully appreciated; if our city has been free, generally speaking, from scenes of riot and confusion, it is mainly attributable to our system of public education. It has been truly said, that if any thing will preserve tranquillity and order in a community, perpetuate the blessings of society and free government, and promote the happiness and prosperity of a people, it must be the general diffusion of knowledge and of moral education."

Will the Hon. Secretary say, that here is insufficient testimony in the case? He cannot say of Messrs. Eliot, Chapman and Brimmer, as he did of the "traveller, Laing," and the author of "The Age of Great Cities," that he does not believe they "had ever visited the schools" they presumed to commend so highly. It has been a matter of much surprise with many, that the secretary should speak with such emphasis against "Laing," and the author of "The Age of Great Cities," and with such confident assurance in praise of the Prussian schools in which all the exercises were in the *German* language. He might not, under such circumstances, judge as correctly, as he could of exercises in his *vernacular;* but having once pronounced the Prussian school system "*completed*," he would naturally think all was right which he did not so fully understand. Mr. Mann speaks, in his fifth report, of the "meetings which have now been held five successive years in *the counties* of the State," and which "have been eminently successful in diffusing information." Nothing has been heard of such meetings in Suffolk, and the secretary has not thus diffused any information, in the metropolis, among the public teachers, to whom, indeed, he has hardly made himself officially known. Did he, in any of his annual circuits, collect any information from the civil fathers of the city? Did he know any thing more of their expressed views of the schools, when he published his seventh report, than he did of the views and services of the teachers? If he did, and disregarded them, by supposing these schools were, in common with others, under a "sleepy supervision," he certainly ought to have made himself, in some good degree, personally acquainted with the schools and the teachers, *before* making such odious comparisons. Has Suffolk, who pays, most willingly, about one third of all the State expenses for education, no claim upon the secretary's attention and courtesy? Should it be said, though Mr. Mann *may* know but little of the Boston schools, others in this country, certainly know nothing of the schools in Scotland, and therefore the comparison may be just, in consideration of the superior character of the Scotch schools; it may be remarked, in answer to such a plea, that some of the Scotch divines, who were lately in this country, said Mr. Mann's account of their schools was a "*real caricature*." "Caricature" means, according to Walker, "any *exaggerated* character, which is *redundant* in some of its parts, and *defective* in others." This definition is given for the information of "*our*" teachers, who "stand immovably fixed to one spot," and "must have text-books" with "questions printed at full length;" and who "hold on by these leading-strings;" and must "assume an awful and mysterious air, and must expound in oracles," and who, like Ichabod Crane, whip their children over all the tall words.

It is as true of some generations, as of individuals, that they are predisposed to favor novelties; and they often mistake change for improvement. Many are inclined to think that much wisdom was born with them; and, with the "scribes and pharisees," are ready to "say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." Historians and philosophers have ever considered the peculiarities of an age, as affording an apology for the individual; and wisdom and benevolence will ever justify such a course. Men, who aim to please those "having itching ears," are often tempted to give up "sound doctrine," and "turn away from the truth unto fables;" but, highly favored is that community, whose children can say, "the *law* was our schoolmaster." Let any one read the writings of such eminent teachers as Page and Abbot, in defence of authority, for the best good of the child; and he must admit, that those who prefer the mawkish sentimentalism of certain advocates of moral suasion, have given up the "truth" for "fables." Let him read the common-sense notions and experimental views of the Rev. Mr. Withington and the Rev. Joseph Emerson, in defence of the *principle* of emulation, and not of the abuse of it; and likewise, Professor Stuart's interpretation of the scripture doctrine of the same subject; and, it is thought, he will have little respect for the sentiments of those who are inconsistently declaiming against such a principle.

The duties and obligations of the public teachers are not properly understood by many well-disposed persons. It has been asserted by some one, that the teachers in the common schools "are the governors of men, in a far more extended sense, than are those legislators, who, with state and ceremony, convene in the hall of the metropolis, to enact and promulgate laws. They are more than rulers, for he who forms is greater than he who commands. While other men arrogate wisdom, and profess an ability to foresee, and predict future events; the teachers, by their influence upon the children, are not uttering predictions, but, preparing fulfilment, and predetermining of what nature the future event shall be." This quotation is made, not to unduly magnify the teacher's office; but rather to remind him of the importance of his calling, and the magnitude of his task. The office of schoolmaster is no sinecure, where the public interest is rightly understood, and duly regarded.

Some *modern* philanthropists seem to imagine, that "half-hour systems," and clock-work machinery, like Mr. Brunel's "epistolary engine," will greatly "relieve mental drudgery;" and, that trick and flattery are safe substitutes for the wisdom and implements of Solomon. Such persons suppose one prescription will answer for all cases, and think the well-bred child and the refractory dunce can be influenced by the same high motives. But it is necessary to bear in mind, not only the results to be produced, but the character of the material to be wrought upon, when considering the "task of public instruction." It is one thing to give form and figure to the wax, and quite a different affair to bring out the living expression from the flinty marble, and worse than flinty granite.

What teacher does not tremble at the consideration of his task and obligations, when he reflects how much, for "the weal and for the wo" of individuals, depends upon his labors. A teacher, who rightly understands his duties, and feels the due responsibilities of his calling, will often endeavor to raise the thoughts and aims of his pupils above things of time and sense. A knowledge of all languages will not compensate for the want of moral sentiment. He is poor in the best of endowments, who has no benevolent feelings for his fellow-men. The navigator, on the broad ocean, may calculate his relation to other objects, celestial and terrestrial, and thus steer his ship amidst numerous dangers; still, if he understand not his relation to his Maker, and know not how to quell the storms in his own breast, and has yet to learn,

> To station quick-eyed prudence at the helm,

he wants a knowledge of the true compass, to carry him through life,

> "Midst constant dangers, to the destined port,
> Unerringly secure."

The path of the public teacher of youth is one beset with many and peculiar difficulties. In his most arduous and trying labors, the recipients of his influence, during his war against vice and ignorance, seldom appreciate his exertions. His obligations and authority, in *loco parentis*, are not duly acknowledged, and are reluctantly submitted to by many over whom he is placed, and to whom he is bound by sacred and moral considerations. Many of his most important duties are as sacrificing to himself, as they may be unsatisfactory to the feelings of his indolent and disobedient pupils. The practical teacher learns by his daily experience, that the delicate relation of parent and child, will often rise mountain-high before him, when he feels his official duties the most obligatory. The juvenile wanderer often finds the ready apologist in the doting parent; and the teacher, who would be true to duty, as the needle to the pole, must rise above temporary considerations, in view of his obligations to himself, the state, and his God. Though he may often find himself a stranger to sympathy and gratitude, still he may well afford to cast his bread upon the waters, if he can be satisfied with the best of all rewards, the consciousness of doing good to young immortals; and can live in the hope, "that our sons may grow up as young plants, and that our daughters may be as the polished corners of the temple." The situation of the public teacher is peculiar in many respects; his influence and exertions must be with the human mind, under every variety of circumstances; and, in this country, he works for a sovereign, who seldom acts alike at two given times, or in two different places. This sovereign has as many faces as there are individuals in the community; and though he temporarily delegates his power, he requires of all his servants, a strict account of their stewardship; and he often acts upon some arbitrary principle, which is no part of the established law of the family. The representative guardians of the public schools, as they succeed each other from year to year, though they wear the same mantle of power, often entertain very different views of the duties and obligations of the teacher. What one may consider of paramount importance, another may regard with light consideration; and an individual may acquire valuable experience, by the end of his official career, when he gives place to another of dissimilar views, and of no practical knowledge; and thus the public teacher may be subjected to the most vacillating authority. There is no want of men of learning and benevolence; but experience is often the greatest requisite to aid the teacher; and, "happy, thrice happy that community," who can boast of such a line of civil fathers, as have blessed the favored city of Boston, during the last twenty years. It may well be believed that the schools of the metropolis of New England have long been under the guardianship of those, whose benevolence and care have increased in proportion to the number of the children.

And, it may be said, without disparagement to past chief magistrates, that Massachusetts can now boast of one whose philanthropy extends to every benevolent cause among the people. By his example and eloquence, he has stood and spoken before tens of thousands, in one of the greatest reforms of the present day; and his influence has not been less salutary as Chairman of the Board of Education, amidst other official duties, in encouraging, by his visits, the instructors and pupils in some of the largest public schools in the State. When public morals and public instruction are under such guardians, well may teachers and pupils rejoice, and all say, Amen.

PRUSSIAN MODES OF INSTRUCTION, AND USE OF TEXT-BOOKS.

In that chapter of the secretary's report, devoted to the description of the Prussian system of education, there are comments upon the mode of instruction and the use of text-books, which we think must exert an influence unfavorable to the interests of education. And since the high official station occupied by the Hon. Secretary, must inevitably give great influence to his opinions upon the subject of education, and the extensive opportunities for observation which he enjoys through the privileges of his office, must add, at least a seeming authority, to his suggestions, — we deem it not unfitting, that those who are not only deeply interested in the cause of education, but who are themselves *practical educators*, should bear their testimony on these subjects, to what they believe experience has proved to be truth, in order that the attention of teachers may be directed to a careful consideration of the same, before they adopt opinions which may be injurious to the interests they are laboring to promote. And in order that we may not be placed too much at disadvantage, in differing on questions of public education, from one whose opinions on that subject bear with them the presence of such decided authority as do those of the secretary, we deem it reasonable also, that we should state, in the outset, what we believe to be indispensable requisites to one who would decide upon such questions, and the position of Mr. Mann, in regard to such decisions. We doubt not that the Hon. Secretary is fully aware of the great responsibility involved in the exercise of the powerful and widely extended influence of his office; and that it is his desire faithfully to acquit himself in the discharge of that responsibility. But while we respect his motives, we are by no means bound to extend the same courtesy to his opinions.

In the first place, it is plainly his duty to proceed in the discussion of all questions of educational interest, with the utmost caution and candor; and more *especially* do we deem it his duty, in all questions relating to the modes of public *instruction*, to be guided rather by the results of experience, than by the theories of speculation. Further, in examining the results of different systems of instruction, he should separate, with impartial discrimination, the abuses of any system or method, from its proper and legitimate use. In these two points, we think the Hon. Secretary has, in more than one instance, entirely failed. Yet we by no means refuse him credit for entire devotion to the cause of education; nor would we in any degree underrate the strenuous efforts which he has professedly, and we may say undoubtedly, made, in behalf of the interests of that cause. But there is requisite to one who would decide upon the comparative merits of different systems of education or modes of instruction, a thorough practical knowledge of their operation and results. It is not sufficient that he may have observed in one instance, the failure of one system, and in another, the success of an opposite system; for the failure of the one, and the success of the other, might in several instances be the result of circumstances, and no exponents of the real merit of either.

It would not be just for him to condemn any method, because he may have witnessed the injurious results of its abuse; nor candid for him, in the comparison of any two methods, to notice only the faults of the one, and the excellencies of the other. Now we believe the secretary has failed of caution and candor in both of the above particulars. Yet not through any want of zeal or attention toward the cause for which he is so assiduously laboring, — but rather from a want of that practical knowledge to which we have just referred, and which is indispensable to the right discharge of many of the duties which he has assumed. But to be satisfied more fully that Mr. Mann has mistaken the sphere of his labors, and that we have not proceeded unfairly, basing our decision upon what, to a hasty reader, might seem a mere assumption of his ignorance of practical education, we will state more carefully, what we believe to be requisite to a practical knowledge of the subject.

To teach upon the subject of public education, and to decide upon the comparative merits of different systems of instruction, or government, it is necessary to be acquainted, not only with their apparent results, but also with the detail of their operation, and their effect in forming the mental habits of the pupils. To judge of this effect, and to decide upon this merit, it is not sufficient to have collected the statistics of a school's progress and condition, or to have witnessed its arrangement and operation, even; but it is necessary to have become acquainted with the actual progress of the minds of the pupils, and to have become sufficiently familiar with the history of their advancement, to trace fully and fairly in its character, the operation of that system under which they have labored. Now this, we believe to be a task requiring too much time and attention, to be performed by one who has discharged duties so manifold and various, as those that have been enumerated, from time to time, in the report of the Hon. Secretary. He surely could not have devoted himself to that long and patient investigation which is necessary, to observe the effects of *any* system sufficiently to decide the question of its merit. He might have observed the uniform accomplishment of a certain amount of labor, or the attainment of a particular stage of advancement in study; but either of these results might be the product of tact and perseverance on the part of the teacher, and in no way the result of that particular method which he may have pursued. We would by no means be understood to prefer the charge of ignorance, in matters of practical education, as a reproach to the Hon. Secretary. Indeed, we do not deem it any ground for censure, that Mr. Mann should be unacquainted with all the various questions of educational interest; for the multiplicity and importance of those questions would preclude the possibility of such an attainment to one, the greater part of whose life has been engrossed by the pursuit of other objects. But what we most regret in the course of the secretary, is, that he has suffered his zeal so far to outstrip his discretion, as to induce him to undertake, not only the general supervision of all the various departments of labor, but also to assume in detail, the direction of the performance of that labor. And we regret this still more, since, holding as he does the seals of the highest official authority in the Board of Education, he has suffered himself to affix them to his own teachings on subjects of vital importance to the *cause* of education, yet, upon *which*, above all others relating to that cause, he has had the least opportunity to inform himself.

Would he not have promoted, in a greater degree, the interests of education, and been more consistent with his own professed principles, if he had devoted himself more exclusively to awakening a feeling of interest in the cause throughout the State; to bringing more laborers into the field; and, where he found them weary and fainting, as he did in the poor town of Pawtucket, had he enlivened them with the warmth of his zeal and the inspiration of his eloquence; and then, though they commenced to labor even at the eleventh hour, had he imitated the conduct of the worthy husbandman, and awarded them the full penny of his approbation, rather than, by leaving them like backward school boys in that disreputable position at the foot of his list, to have awakened in them the evil and bitter spirit of emulation, which he so much deprecates? But to substantiate the position we assumed in regard to the opinions of the secretary, suggested in his remarks on Prussian schools, we invite the attention of the reader, to that page (133) of the report, in which Mr. Mann makes several statements, of the *truth* of which, he says, there can be no doubt.

In paragraph numbered 3 on that page, he informs us that, in the space of six weeks, he visited hundreds of schools, and saw tens of thousands of scholars. We confess we are not a little perplexed to understand how Mr. Mann could, in thirty-six days, have visited so great a number of schools; and the problem becomes still more difficult of solution since, in the paragraph introductory to those *facts*, upon which he placed so much *emphasis*, he states that he entered the schools before the first recitation in the morning, and remained until the last was completed at night. This statement of the secretary, reminds us of that facetious suggestion of his, on the 57th page of his report, where, after lamenting the want of practical mathematical instruction in our own schools, he says: "If a boy states that he has seen ten thousand horses, make him count ten thousand kernels of corn, and he will never see so many horses again." We think that if the Hon. Secretary should count in conjunction the number of days and the number of schools visited, he would never visit so many schools again in the same space of time. But supposing, for the sake of argument, that Mr. Mann did visit hundreds of schools, and see tens of thousands of scholars; we contend that it would be impossible, in observing the operation of any system in so many different schools, in so short a period of time, to ascertain with certainty, *any thing* of the real effect of such system upon the minds of the pupils; or to form any opinion even, save what might be grounded upon inferences of the probable results of the course pursued. Mr. Mann undoubtedly observed (as indeed he has informed us in his report) sufficient of the operation of the Prussian system of education, to answer the inquiries suggested at the commencement of the chapter on Prussian schools. He informed himself, unquestionably, of the branches taught; the processes of instruction; the motives employed to stimulate the minds of the pupils to action; and observed, no doubt, the apparent results of the whole. Indeed, he seems to have been extremely expeditious in collecting statistics of the condition and operation of the European schools, and though we are not quite sure "to what extent" so great haste might not have been at the expense of accuracy, yet he has presented in his report, an amount and variety of information almost wonderful. But he could, in his hasty review of *schools*, and *scholars*, form no just estimate of the actual effect of the course of mental discipline there pursued, upon the pupils. He witnessed the operation of a system universally regulated by rigid legal restrictions, and he seems to have been delighted to find the same causes leading always to uniform results; and it may be a merit in the Prussian system, that such is the case; for systematic action is to be desired in all institutions, though it have no merit in effect, save it be founded on correct principles, and subject to a proper direction. We think Mr. Mann has failed of caution in his estimate of the Prussian school system, and that the favorable impression which he received of some of its prominent characteristics, has been the only ground for pronouncing the whole perfect.

In order, however, to decide more fairly upon this, let us review, briefly, some of his remarks upon the subject. He has given a description of the method of conducting a recitation of an advanced class in reading, as he witnessed it in one of the Prussian schools. He informs us that the teacher, in connection with the reading lesson, delivered a "sort of oral lecture" to his pupils, in which he entered, with the greatest minuteness, into an explanation of all the subjects alluded to in the lesson, enlarging upon the geographical references, instituting comparisons between the foreign customs alluded to and their own, and illustrating even the *illustrations* themselves, until he had consumed an entire hour upon six, four-line verses. This method of instruction, the secretary evidently refers to as a superior one, and as meeting his entire approbation. Now we beg leave to differ from the opinion of the Hon. Secretary, and to pronounce this method, inconsistent with the purposes of public instruction, and by no means productive of the highest results. And in order to treat the subject fairly, we will state our ideas of the object of public education, and the ground upon which we have based our decision.

The object of the elementary instruction of our public schools, as we understand it, is, not alone to impart a certain amount of knowledge to the pupils, but to give them moreover such training, as shall enable them to pursue the subjects which may afterwards claim their attention, successfully for themselves; to cultivate their powers of discrimination and reflection, that they may observe and decide for themselves; in fine, to discipline and strengthen their minds, and prepare them, as far as is possible, for that independent action, which will be required of them in the discharge of the duties of life. In order to accomplish these purposes, we believe the following requisitions to be indispensable. First, that the mind of the pupil be taught to grasp the object of its pursuit, with constant and vigorous attention; secondly, that the mind be trained to habits of strict analysis in the investigation of all subjects; and thirdly, that it be taught to classify and arrange properly, the subjects of its knowledge. The first of these requisitions is necessary, that the pupil may be able to master successfully, the difficulties of his studies, and to retain what he acquires; the second, that he may have a definite conception of what he learns, and understand the various relations and dependencies of the subjects which he investigates; and the third, that he may, when desirable, be able to make a practical use of his acquisitions. Now in what way does the method of instruction approved by Mr. Mann, operate in establishing these mental habits? That the method pursued by the Prussian instructor, is calculated to interest the mind of the pupil, we would not deny; for the variety of information and illustration must, without fail, gratify his curiosity, and for the time arrest his attention; but it will in no degree induce that habit of patient and constant attention to a subject, to which we have before alluded. On the other hand, the variety of information presented, and the novelty of illustration, would tend rather to dissipate, than to strengthen the habit of calm and deliberate attention to a single subject. And the mind of the pupil, instead of forming the habit of independent and individual effort, which is so necessary to successful study, would become accustomed to act only through the force of that excitement which is supplied by the teacher.

Here, lest we be understood to hold in light esteem, the ability on the part of the teachers to arrest the attention, and interest the mind of the pupil, we expressly state, that we not only deem such ability of great importance, but that we consider it one of the highest qualifications of the teacher, and absolutely necessary to proper government and successful instruction. We do not object to the exercise of such ability on the part of the teacher, to arouse the mental energies of his pupils, to interest them in the pursuit of knowledge, and to call forth into action the higher qualities of their moral and social natures; but we do object to the exercise of that ability to such extent, and in such manner, that the pupils become accustomed to depend, for their motive to mental effort, upon that excitement alone which is furnished by their teacher. We would have them stimulated to the pursuit of knowledge, by a love of that pursuit for itself, and by a proper appreciation of its results; and not by that temporary interest which is awakened by the pleasing manner or amusing speech of their instructor; for, the former influence, becomes a constant spring of action in the mind, while the latter, depends for its existence upon the presence of the teacher who exercises it. Further, we believe that care is necessary on the part of the teacher, lest the stimulation and excitement, which the pupil experiences under his influence at school, should be so strong, as to produce a reaction, and, when that influence ceases, to leave the mind disinclined to exertion; its energies exhausted, and its faculties deadened. This state of mind must surely be most unfavorable to a perception of those "social, every-day duties and obligations," to which Mr. Mann very properly attaches so much importance. To illustrate our meaning more fully, we invite attention to the following description of Scotch schools, given on the 66th and 67th pages of the report:

"To an unaccustomed spectator, on entering one of these rooms, all seems uproar, turbulence, and the contention of angry voices, — the teacher traversing the space before his class, in a state of high excitement, the pupils springing from their seats, darting to the middle of the floor, and sometimes, with extended arms, forming a circle around him, two, three, or four deep, — every finger quivering from the intensity of their emotions, — until some more sagacious mind, outstripping its rivals, solves the difficulty, — when all are in their seats again, as though by magic, and ready for another encounter of wits.

"I have seen a school kept for two hours in succession, in this state of intense mental activity, with nothing more than an alternation of subjects during the time, or perhaps the relaxation of singing. At the end of the recitation, both teacher and pupils would glow with heat, and be covered with perspiration, as though they had been contending in the race or the ring. It would be utterly impossible for the children to bear such fiery excitement, if the physical exercise were not as violent as the mental is intense. But children, who actually leap into the air from the energy of their impulses, and repeat this as often as once in two minutes, on an average, will not suffer from suppressed activity of the muscular system."

These are the schools in comparison with which, Mr. Mann says, the most active schools of the United States must be regarded almost as dormitories, and by the side of whose pupils, our own would seem to be hybernating animals, just emerging from their torpid state, and but half conscious of the possession of life and faculties. Now we do not hesitate to say, that such a state of mental excitement as Mr. Mann describes in the above language, can not be healthful; and that such extravagant mental exercise is not conducive to the formation of those thoughtful habits of mind, which alone can work out the results of reason. And we most earnestly pray that *our* country, — whose citizens are already, to a great extent, destitute of habits of independent thought and deliberate action, and too much accustomed to think and act through the forced excitement of motives that may be, and often are, supplied by wicked and designing men, — may be kept forever safe from a system of public instruction which we think calculated to augment so great an evil. And we trust that the energy and impulsiveness of our noble-minded youth, may not be subjected to a discipline, whose tendency must be to enfeeble, rather than to invigorate, their mental faculties; and to render them the weak subjects of passion, rather than rational freemen. May *our* system of education be designed to cultivate the reasoning faculties of our pupils, and to render them not only educated, but thinking men, qualified to support the institutions of our country, and to protect them against the invasion of misguided enthusiasm and the treachery of political ambition. But that we may not be charged with speaking from the authority of our own opinion merely, we will again turn to the report, to substantiate our views. On the 176th and 177th pages, after commending the efficiency of the intellectual training in a school of high character in Edinburgh, and expressing his astonishment at the familiarity of the pupils with the writings of the New Testament, and at the wonderful facility with which they recognised the chapter and verse of different passages which he read to them, Mr. Mann makes the following statements:

> "Amazed at this command of the Bible by children so young, I said to myself, How happy, if their ideas and sentiments of duty correspond with their verbal knowledge of the great source whence they derive its maxims." "I then asked the class what they understood by the word 'honesty,' or, 'what it is to be honest.' After a little delay, one of the class replied: 'To give money to the poor;' and to this definition all assented. I then inquired what they understood by the word 'conscience.' Several replied, 'It is the thinking principle.' I asked if all agreed to that, and all but one gave token of assent. This one, a remarkably intelligent looking boy, observing that I was not satisfied with the reply, said, 'Conscience tells us what to do;' and when I rejoined, 'Does it not tell us also what not to do?' he assented. I requested the class to give me an instance of what was meant by 'lying.' All exclaimed, as with one voice, 'Ananias and Sapphira;' but beyond this, though I pressed them for some time, they could present no combination of circumstances which would answer the description of lying."

After giving an account of various other questions similar to the above, Mr. Mann again says: "The children had been admirably trained in most respects, but their minds seemed not to have been turned in this direction." Now we cannot think with Mr. Mann that those children "had been admirably trained;" and we do think that their failure to answer his simple questions, and the obtuseness of their perceptions, plainly evinced by their inability to comprehend his repeated suggestions, satisfactorily show, that it was not *moral* training *alone*, which the pupils lacked, but *intellectual;* and, further afford fair ground for the inference, that the intellectual training which they did receive was so mechanical and faulty, as to deprive the pupils, to some extent, of the power of exercising their judgment, even in the ordinary decisions of common sense. And we are at a loss to conceive, how any one who had the least acquaintance with practical education, could have arrived at such conclusions, as did Mr. Mann from such data as he collected in the Scotch schools. He informs us that the exercises in those schools were conducted in such manner, that not only the mental, but the physical energies, of both teachers and pupils were called into action so violent, that, at the close of the exercises, they were all "glowing with heat," and "covered with perspiration." We must confess, that in reading the secretary's account of what he witnessed in the Scotch schools, we were not a little troubled to divest ourselves of the idea that we were contemplating a vividly-colored picture of the imagination, and that Mr. Mann was indulging in a good-humored caricature of the modes of instruction in those schools, rather than giving a correct description of their actual appearance; and we cannot conceive how any one could have experienced any other sensation than that of being amused, at beholding *pupils*, *during school hours*, "actually leaping into the air as often as once in two minutes," or rushing up, all "covered with perspiration," after each successful encounter of wits, to assume the station of honor at the head of the class. But we will return to the train of our remarks, upon the mode of imparting instruction to pupils, from which we have been tempted somewhat to digress. We believe it impossible, when the subjects presented to the mind of the pupil are many and various, that he should retain, for any length of time, what the teacher imparts to him. Hence, on this ground alone, there is a double argument against this method of instruction. But, again; this method, or rather I should say, this want of method, is entirely destructive of those habits of analyzing and classifying, to which we attach so much importance in the cultivation of mind.

We contend, that an allusion to a variety of subjects, in the same connection with the one to which the attention of the pupil is mainly directed, not only precludes the possibility of his analyzing and classifying what is imparted to him, but so confuses his mind, that he receives no distinct impression of the subject of his regular study. We would by no means deny, that an occasional reference to subjects of collateral information, or a full explanation of what may be new or obscure to the pupil's mind, may be proper or even necessary; and, as far as our observation has extended, every competent teacher supplies such necessity on the part of the pupil; but we do deny, the propriety of making each geographical reference, the subject of a lesson in geography, or of taking every technical word or historical allusion, as the text of a scientific or historical lecture. Such a course may amuse or interest the pupil for a time, or even a spectator, as it did Mr. Mann, who seemed particularly delighted with it; but it calls forth no active mental exertion on the part of the pupil; he sits the passive receiver of a variety of information, which interests him sufficiently to arrest his attention temporarily, or, perhaps, even to be mostly recalled at his next recitation. But this method of mental discipline can never form those habits of patient investigation and keen discrimination, which are necessary to master science, or even in order to arrive at any high results. But let us examine still further. In speaking of the difference between the Prussian method of teaching arithmetic, and our own, Mr. Mann says, that they require a more thorough analysis of all the questions than we do, but do not separate the processes so much from each other. Surely, the above is a most unfortunate comment upon the secretary's ability to judge of the different methods of imparting mathematical instruction. If we rightly understand the matter, the analysis of a question in mathematics, necessarily implies the separation of the different processes of its solution, and a question containing but one process, if it be properly stated, must include the analysis of that process. We can easily conceive that Mr. Mann, with a preëxisting prejudice against the use of text-books, might have been pleased with the Prussian method of teaching arithmetic; but we cannot conceive how he could have formed his decision of its superiority, from notions so imperfect, as to admit of his making such vague and unmeaning statements in regard to it. And yet, this is not the first instance of inaccuracy to be found in the writings of the secretary, on the subject of mathematical instruction; in his sixth annual report, after deprecating the study of algebra in our schools, he proposes the following question: "Among farmers and road-makers, why should geometry take precedence of surveying?" But, we leave this question to the consideration of *mathematicians*, and return to the remarks of the secretary, in his *seventh* annual report. He says further, the youngest classes in the Prussian schools are taught Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and Division, promiscuously; and that, in later stages, this practice is enlarged in more than one direction; and in the same connection, he remarks to this effect —that they teach more from the understanding than we do, and less by rule, and that the difference results from their teaching from the head, and our teaching from text-books. Now we believe this to be one of the many instances in which the Hon. Secretary has been led into gross error, by his want of experience in education. Because he has observed the *abuse* of text-books in some of our schools, he has condemned at once, not only their abuse, but their use, also; and adopted an extreme which we believe must be more injurious in its influence upon the minds of pupils, than the greatest possible abuse of text-books, because it is entirely wanting in their method, and does not possess, in any degree, the same certainty of accurate information.

But to show the way in which Mr. Mann has acquired his prejudices against text-books, we will again consult the report. On the 122d and 123d pages of the report, Mr. Mann makes the following comments: "With us, it too often happens that if a higher branch — geometry, natural philosophy, zoology, botany — is to be taught, both teacher and class must have text-books. At the beginning of these text-books, all the technical names and definitions belonging to the subject are set down. These, before the pupil has any practical idea of their meaning, must be committed to memory. The book is then studied, chapter by chapter. At the bottom of each page, or at the ends of the sections, are questions printed at full length. At the recitations, the teacher holds on by these leading-strings. He introduces no collateral knowledge. He exhibits no relation between what is contained in the book, and other kindred subjects, or the actual business of men and the affairs of life. At length the day of examination comes. The pupils rehearse from memory with a suspicious fluency; or, being asked for some useful application of their knowledge, some practical connection between that knowledge and the concerns of life, they are silent, or give some ridiculous answer, which at once disparages science and gratifies the ill-humor of some ignorant satirist. Of course, the teaching of the higher branches falls into disrepute in the minds of all sensible men, as, under such circumstances, it ought to do." We freely confess that there is ground for this charge of the Hon. Secretary against the *abuse* of text-books, though we think the case which he presents, an exaggerated one, and one which, if it occurred in any intelligent community, would at once condemn the teacher who should allow it, as incompetent to his office. Yet we think the charge lies, in effect, against the abuse of the text-books *only*, and not against their legitimate use. We doubt not that, in some of the numerous schools of our country, there may be found incompetent teachers, and that superficial and imperfect instruction is imparted, as the necessary consequence; but if, in those schools, improper and unprofitable use be made of text-books, that fact furnishes no argument against their proper use, any more than does a poor school against the usefulness of good ones. But notwithstanding their liability to abuse, the secretary has evidently fallen into error, in his notion of the extent to which text-books should be used, and in supposing that accurate and well-digested scientific knowledge can be obtained without pursuing, with care and attention, a rigid course of study, in such a manner that the subjects of investigation may be presented to the mind for continued and vigilant attention. We believe text-books to be necessary, not only as the medium of distinct and accurate information, but also to enable the pupil, (as we before said,) to acquire habits of discrimination and patient investigation ; and we believe care to be necessary on the part of the teacher also, lest in his explanations and assistance to the pupil, he should render his task too easy. We would by no means deny the importance of ample explanations and illustrations from the teacher ; but they should be given, after the pupil has investigated the subject attentively for himself, and has prepared himself, not only to answer, but to propose questions. And the questions and illustrations should be designed rather to call into exercise the mind of the pupil, than to afford him a full and satisfactory solution of each difficulty that he encounters. We can easily conceive that children, in schools conducted according to the description which the secretary gave of the Prussian schools, would seldom be seen in tears ; and we venture to assert, that the teachers of our own country, should they pursue a system of instruction, requiring but little mental exertion on the part of pupils, and one designed to amuse and interest them, might avoid many of the occasions for punishment which now occur, and present, nearly, if not quite as much cause for gratification to the Hon. Secretary, as did the Prussian instructors. Moreover, it is highly important that all explanations and illustrations should be concise and explicit, and not be encumbered with much form, or many words. To illustrate our idea, we will refer again to Mr. Mann's pattern of excellence, — the Prussian method of instruction. In his description of the Prussian instructors' method of teaching a young class to count, Mr. Mann says: "The teacher then asked, 'What is three composed of?' *A.* 'Three is composed of one and two.' *Q.* 'Of what else is three composed?' *A.* 'Three is composed of three ones.' *Q.* 'What is four composed of?' *A.* 'Four is composed of four ones, of two and two, of three and one.' *Q.* 'What is five composed of?' *A.* "Five is composed of five ones, of two and three, of two twos and one, of four and one.'" And thus he proceeds, giving a description of the formation of several successive numbers, by all the possible combinations of the different numbers of units contained in them. Now we think it evident upon the slightest reflection, that all this variety of exercise does not give the learner any more accurate idea of the value of the different numbers which he is counting, but tends rather to weaken, than otherwise, the force of the simple method usually adopted. We think it would be decidedly more forcible, and certainly more simple, to let the names of the numbers suggest their values, as they were designed to do. A unit is the standard of measure in numbers, and all numbers are named according to the number of units contained in them. Hence, to give a pupil an accurate idea of the value of numbers, it would surely be sufficient to explain to him that their value always depends upon the number of units which they contain. With all due deference to the opinion of Mr. Mann, we are not yet convinced that the Prussian teachers have, in any degree, improved, in their method of teaching to count, upon the idea of those mathematicians who invented that system of numbers and the modes of expressing them, now in use.

We think that we have witnessed, even in *Boston*, modes of imparting mathematical instruction to the younger classes of pupils, infinitely more simple, and surely more in accordance with correct principles of analysis, than that so highly approved by Mr. Mann. And we believe, had the secretary made himself acquainted with the method of teaching the higher branches of mathematics, pursued in that class of schools in our own country, which holds the same relative rank, as did those which he visited in Europe, that he would have witnessed examples of teaching, equally worthy of commendation with those of which he speaks in such high terms of praise in his report. We have witnessed in several schools which we have visited, even in the *Commonwealth* of *Massachusetts*, instruction in the higher branches of mathematics, which we think the *secretary* would have done well to witness previous to his visit to Europe, not only that he might have been better prepared to judge of the merit of the schools which he saw abroad, but that he might have selected and reported some of the examples of good teaching, from the schools of *his own country*,—and thus encouraged those teachers who are spending their lives in its service, by the "glad tidings" of *their own* success, rather than to have discouraged them, by comparisons which he is not yet qualified to make, and which are as bitter as they are unjust. We have seen not only "*teachers* standing before the black-board, drawing the diagrams and explaining all the relations between their several parts, while the pupils, in their seats, copied the figures, and took down brief heads of the solutions," but we have seen *pupils* at the black-board, constructing those same diagrams, on scientific principles, and in illustration of propositions drawn from their *text-books;* further, even in these "*dormitories*" of ours, we have seen the "*hybernating animals*" sent to the black-board to solve questions in geometry and astronomy, *original*, with the teacher; and with nothing given but the simple data of the questions, we have seen them construct *original* diagrams, and give accurate and concise solutions of the questions. But we leave this subject here, trusting that our remarks will lead to a careful consideration of all questions of public instruction, on the part of those immediately interested in the cause, and we shall have done all that we hoped to do, if we succeed in awakening in the minds of those who are *practical* educators, a more earnest attention to the subject of public instruction, and in inducing them to come forth, and unite their efforts in contending against that tide of *theories*, which is fast sweeping away the landmarks of *experience*. And, however unwelcome the contest, we trust, that in the defence of what they believe to be truth, they will stand undismayed by the presence of power, and unshaken by the splendid conclusions of those *imaginative* educators, who would substitute the pleasing fictions of speculation, for the sound and sober dictates of reason.

MODES OF TEACHING CHILDREN TO READ.

Reading, justly deserves the first rank among the studies of our schools. As an accomplishment alone, it possesses intrinsic excellence; but, considered as fundamental to other departments of learning, its value cannot be too highly estimated. In judging, therefore, of the merits of any system by which this branch may be taught, *remote*, as well as immediate effects should be duly regarded. A child, even at the threshold of his education, should be subjected to any delay, which the formation of correct habits may require. He should never be hurried over difficulties, at first concealed, yet, in his progress, unavoidable, simply to make his entrance into the temple of learning, easy and agreeable. A system of instruction is subjected to an unworthy test, when the chief excellence claimed for it consists in *smoothing* the path of the learner. To ascertain where the *true* path lies, and to exhibit what, to us, seems erroneous, are the objects of the following discussion.

Though differing from Mr. Mann, upon this subject, we would, by no means, be supposed to undervalue his efforts in the cause of education, or detract aught from the benefits his labors have conferred. Our dissent from his views arises from an honest conviction that, if adopted, they would retard the progress of sound learning. His opinions on the method of teaching reading, may be learned from the following quotations, taken from his second and seventh annual reports, and from his "Lecture on Spelling-Books, delivered before the American Institute of Instruction, August, 1841."

> "I am satisfied that our greatest error, in teaching children to read, lies in beginning with the alphabet; — in giving them what are called the 'Names of the Letters,' *a*, *b*, *c*, &c.". . ."Although in former reports and publications I have dwelt at length upon what seems to me the absurdity of teaching to read by *beginning* with the alphabet, yet I feel constrained to recur to the subject again, — being persuaded that no thorough reform will ever be effected in our schools until this practice is abolished."—*Seventh Annual Report*, pp. 91, 92.

> "Whole words should be taught before teaching the letters of which they are composed."—*Lecture on Spelling-Books*, p. 13.

> "The mode of teaching words first, however, is not mere theory; nor is it new. It has now been practised for some time in the primary schools in the city of Boston, — in which there are four or five thousand children, — and it is found to succeed better than the old mode."—*Common School Journal*, Vol. I. p. 326.

> "During the first year of a child's life, he perceives, thinks, and acquires something of a store of ideas, without any reference to words or letters. After this, the wonderful faculty of language begins to develop itself. Children then utter words, — the names of objects around them, — as whole sounds, and without any conception of the letters of which those words are composed. In speaking the word 'apple,' for instance, young children think no more of the Roman letters which spell it, than, in eating the fruit, they think of the chemical ingredients, — the oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon, — which compose it. Hence, presenting them with the alphabet, is giving them what they never saw, heard, or thought of before. It is as new as algebra, and, to the eye, not very unlike it. But printed names of known things are the signs of sounds which their ears have been accustomed to hear, and their organs of speech to utter, and which may excite agreeable feelings and associations, by reminding them of the objects named. When put to learning the letters of the alphabet first, the child has no acquaintance with them, either by the eye, the ear, the tongue, or the mind; but if put to learning familiar words first, he already knows them by the ear, the tongue, and the mind, while his eye only is unacquainted with them. He is thus in-

troduced to a stranger, through the medium of old acquaintances. It can hardly be doubted, therefore, that a child would learn to name any twenty-six familiar words, much sooner than the twenty-six unknown, unheard, and unthought-of letters of the alphabet."—*Ibid.*

"The practice of beginning with the 'Names of the Letters,' is founded upon the idea that it facilitates the combination of them [?] into words. On the other hand I believe that if two children, of equal quickness and capacity, are taken, one of whom can name every letter of the alphabet, at sight, and the other does not know them from Chinese characters, the latter can be most easily taught to read, — or, in other words, that learning the letters first is an absolute hindrance.". . . "The 'Names of the Letters' are not elements in the sounds of words; or are so, only in a comparatively small number of cases. To the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, the child is taught to give twenty-six sounds, and no more."—*Seventh Annual Report*, p. 92.

"But, not only do the same vowels appear in different dresses, like masqueraders, but like harlequins they exchange garbs with each other."—*Ibid*, p. 95.

"In one important particular, the consonants are more perplexing than the vowels. The very definition of a consonant, as given in the spelling-books, is, 'a letter which has no sound or only an imperfect one, without the help of a vowel.' And yet the definers themselves, and the teachers who follow them, proceed immediately to give a perfect sound to all the consonants. If a consonant has 'only an imperfect sound,' why, in teaching children to read, should not this imperfect sound be taught them? And again, in giving the names of the consonants, why should the vowel be sometimes prefixed, and sometimes suffixed?"—*Ibid.*

"For another reason, the rapidity of acquisition will be greater, if words are taught before letters. To learn the words signifying objects, qualities, actions, with which the child is familiar, turns his attention to those objects, if present, or revives the idea of them, if absent, and thus they may be made the source of great interest and pleasure."—*Common School Journal*, Vol. I. p. 326.

For the sake of distinction, and from its recent origin, this mode of teaching reading is called the *new method.* To whom belongs the honor of its discovery seems not to have been fully ascertained. Miss Edgeworth, in the opinion of Mr. Pierce, was the first to recommend it. "It is practiced," he says, "by Mr. Wood, late principal of the Sessional school, Edinburgh; by Jacotot, the celebrated teacher of the

Borough school, and others. It is founded in reason and philosophy; and it must become general."

The plan of teaching, as developed by the publications of the secretary, by Mr. Pierce's "Lecture on Reading," and by various other publications, is substantially as follows: whole, but familiar words, without any reference to the letters which compose them, are first to be taught. The alphabet, as such, is kept entirely concealed. Some three or four words are arranged on a single page of a primer prepared for the purpose, or are written on the black-board several times, and in various orders, as follows: cat — dog — chair; dog — cat — chair; chair — cat — dog. These are pointed out to the child, who is required to utter them at the teacher's dictation, and to learn them by a careful inspection of their forms, as whole objects. After these are supposed to be learned, new words are dictated to the pupil, in the same manner as before. This process is repeated, till the child has acquired a sufficient number of words to read easy sentences in which they are combined. To what extent this mode of learning words should be carried, is, nowhere, definitely stated. Mr. Pierce says: "When they are perfectly familiar with the first words chosen, and the sentence which they compose, select other words, and form other sentences; and so on indefinitely." He then proceeds to recommend several books, as containing suitable sentences for this purpose. Of these, one prepared by Miss Peabody, now Mrs. Mann, contains, he says, "a full illustration of the whole method, with words and sentences." Since this book is also recommended, by the secretary, as containing the best exemplification of the whole plan, it may be taken as a standard, by which to form an estimate of the extent to which the friends of the new system would carry this process of teaching words.

More than a hundred words, having little or no apparent connection with each other, and arranged in the manner above described, occupy the first twenty or thirty pages. Then follows a reading lesson, in which these words, with many more, are joined together in sentences. Subsequent to this lesson, and arranged as before, is another set of words followed by another reading lesson, and so of the remaining part of the book, save some fifteen pages containing the alphabet, a few lessons in spelling, and a few cuts for drawing. The whole number of words in this "Primer" does not differ materially from seven hundred. Derivative words, though differing but slightly from their primitives, are, in this reckoning, to be counted, because this minuteness of difference enhances the difficulty of acquisition. "When the scholars," says Mr. Pierce, "have reached this stage of advancement," by which, it is supposed, he means, have learned all the words contained in this or other books which he recommends, "you may teach them the *name* and the *power* of the letters, especially the latter; though I can conceive no great disadvantage from deferring it to a still later period;" that is, till they have learned more words. It appears then, that at some period in the child's progress, after learning either seven hundred, a thousand, or two thousand words, he is to commence the laborious and unwelcome task of learning "the unknown, unheard, and unthought-of letters of the alphabet." Here, if ever, it is supposed, he begins to learn how to combine letters into words; that is, learns how to spell; and thus, by a new process, acquires the power of uttering words, without having them previously pronounced by the teacher.

As this system is somewhat new, and has not been well tested by experiment, although its immediate adoption is earnestly recommended by high authority, it cannot be reasonably supposed that a system by which the present generation were taught to read, a system as prevalent as is the mode of alphabetical writing, and one which, from its long and uninterrupted use, has become venerable with age, will be abolished, unless good and substantial reasons can be given for such change. Indeed, change itself, is undesirable. If the new system can be shown only to be equally as good as the old, no change should take place. Positive proof of its superior advantages alone, should be considered, or, at least, the *probabilities* of a successful issue, should so far exceed the chances of a failure, as to amount to a good degree of certainty. As, until quite recently, the secretary has presented, rather than strongly advocated the claims of the system, his opinions, have called for nothing more than a passing consideration. But, as his personal and official influence is now exerted for its adoption, that our silence may not be construed into assent, we feel impelled to express a respectful dissent from his views.

Aware that his position is to be sustained against prevailing usage, he has given his reasons for believing, "that no thorough reform will ever be effected in our schools until this practice [of beginning with the alphabet] is abolished." These reasons are drawn,

1st.— From what he conceives to be the *natural order* of acquisition.

2d.— From the anomalies of the alphabet.

3d.— From an impression which he has, that "the rapidity of acquisition will be greater, if words are taught before letters."

With us, as teachers, the main question is, whether or not we approve of the new system, and can recommend its universal adoption.

In assuming the negative of the question, it is first to be shown that the arguments urged in favor of the system, fail to make it even *equal* in value to the old, much more *superior;* and, then, that there are reasons of a positive character, which are adverse to it, and serve to show it vastly *inferior* to the old system.

Before entering upon a consideration of the separate arguments which have been urged in its support, some general remarks will be necessary, in order to remove whatever is irrelevant to the question, and to restrict it within its appropriate limits.

1*st.* — *Whether words should be taught before letters, is a question which should be confined strictly to written language.*

That much irrelevant matter, employed in the secretary's argument, arises from confounding written with spoken language, appears from the following passage in his lecture: "The advantages of teaching children, by beginning with whole words, are many. . . . . What is to be learned is affiliated to what is already known." So in the quotation at the beginning of this article, he says: "But if put to learning familiar words first, he [the child] already knows them by the *ear*, the *tongue*, and the *mind*, while his *eye* only is unacquainted with them. He is thus introduced to a *stranger*, through the medium of old acquaintances." The principle here claimed for the new system, is that of passing from the *known* to the *unknown*. The principle is good; it is of its application that we complain. The secretary speaks of "*familiar words;*" the question arises, *What* is familiar? *What* is known? When we speak of words, we may mean either the *audible*, or the *written* signs of our ideas. The term *word* is, therefore, ambiguous, unless it be so qualified as to have a specific reference. In speaking of familiar words, nothing can be meant except that the child can *utter* them; he knows them only as *audible* signs. To say that *printed* words are familiar to a child's tongue, can have no other meaning than that he is accustomed to the taste of ink; to say that such words are familiar to his *ear*, is to attribute to that ink, a tongue; and to say that they are familiar to the mind, is to suppose the child already able to read. Now, as reading aloud is nothing less than translating *written* into *audible* signs, a knowledge of the latter, whatever may be the system of teaching, is presupposed to exist, and is about as necessary to the one learning to read, as would be a knowledge of the English language to one who would translate Greek into English.

To illustrate. Take the printed word *mother;* when pronounced, it is familiar "to the ear, the tongue, and the mind." Does this familiarity aid the child in the least, in comprehending the printed picture? Can he, from his acquaintance with the audible sign, utter that sign by looking upon the six unknown letters which spell it?

The truth is, in all that belongs, appropriately, to the question under consideration, the word is unknown; unknown as a whole, unknown in all its parts, and unknown as to the mode of combining those parts. The question, when restricted to its appropriate limits, is simply this; 'What is the best method of teaching a child to comprehend *printed* words?' All that is said about the familiarity of the child with the audible sign, and the thing signified by it, is claimed in common by the advocates of both systems, and is, therefore, totally irrelevant in the discussion of this question; since what belongs equally to opposite parties can have no influence in a question in which they differ.

What though "printed names of known things are the signs of sounds which their [the children's] ears have been accustomed to hear, and their organs of speech to utter, and which may excite agreeable feelings and associations, by reminding them of the objects named?" Is the rose any the less agreeable to the mind of the child, or, is the word *rose*, when pronounced, any the less familiar to his organs of speech or to his ear, because its printed sign is learned by combining the letters r-o-s-e? Or does the mere act of telling the child to say *rose*, while pointing to the picture, formed of four unknown letters, in any way enhance its agreeableness?

The question, then, is not whether a child shall be "introduced to a stranger through the medium of old acquaintances," for, in fact, by the new system, this introduction is made through the medium of the teacher's voice.

The true question at issue is, whether the child shall be furnished with an attendant to announce the name of the stranger, or whether he shall be furnished with *letters* of introduction by which, unattended, he may make the acquaintance, not of some seven hundred strangers merely, but of the whole seventy thousand unknown members of our populous vocabulary.

2d.— The question must be confined not merely to written language, but to written language of a particular species.

When the secretary, in speaking of a child after the first year of his life, says that, then, "the wonderful faculty of language begins to develop itself," he undoubtedly refers to spoken language. And well may that be called a wonderful faculty by which, through the agency of the vocal organs, we can so modify *mere sounds*, as to send them forth freighted with thoughts which may cause the hearts of others to thrill with extatic delight, or throb with unutterable anguish. And no wonder that there should have existed, early in the history of the world, a desire to enchain and represent to the eye these evanescent messengers of thought. Hence the early and rude attempts at writing, by means of pictures and symbols. But these, unfortunately, were representatives of the *message*, not the *messenger;* of the idea, not the sound which conveys it. At length arose that wonderful *invention*, the art of representing to the eye, by means of letters, the component parts of a *spoken word*, so that now, not merely the *errand*, but the *bearer* stands pictured before us. The grand and distinctive feature of this invention is, that it establishes a connection between the *written* and the *audible* signs of our ideas. It throws, as it were, a bridge across the otherwise impassable gulf which must ever have separated the one from the other. The hieroglyphics and symbols of the ancients, performed but one function. To those who, by a purely arbitrary association, were able to pass from the sign to the thing signified, they were representatives of ideas—and ideas *merely;* hence they are called ideographic characters, and that mode of writing has been denominated the *symbolic*, and is exemplified in the Chinese language.

On the other hand, words written with alphabetic characters perform two functions. Taken as whole pictures, they, like Chinese characters, represent ideas; but taken as composed of alphabetic elements which represent simple sounds, they conduct us directly to the audible sign which, in the case of common words, we have from childhood been accustomed to associate with the thing signified. Owing to the last office which these words perform, namely, that of representing sounds, this mode of writing is called the *phonetic*. It has been said with truth, that "the art of writing, especially when reduced to simple phonetic alphabets like ours, has, perhaps, done more than any other invention for the improvement of the human race." If any one wishes still further to be convinced of the difference between the two, let him compare the figure 5, which is purely a symbol, with the written word *five;* the one gives no idea whatever of the *spoken word*, whereas the other conducts us directly to it. Here the contrast is too striking to be misapprehended. A person might read Chinese, without knowing a single sound of the language, simply because Chinese characters were never intended to represent sounds.

The new system of teaching reading, abandons entirely this distinctive feature of the phonetic mode of writing, and our words are treated as though they were capable of performing but one function, that of representing ideas. The language, although written with alphabetic characters, becomes, to all intents and purposes, a symbolic language. Now we say, as ours is designedly a phonetic language, no system of teaching ought to meet with public favor, that strips it of its principal power. And we confess ourselves not a little surprised that the secretary, who cherishes such correct views of the inferiority of the Chinese language, should urge us to convert ours into Chinese. He says, in his second annual report, (*Com. Sch. Journal*, Vol. I., pp. 323, 324:) "It is well known that science itself, among scientific men, can never advance far beyond a scientific language in which to record its laws and principles. An unscientific language, like the Chinese, will keep a people unscientific forever." Besides losing the vantage ground which we now possess, of passing with ease from the visible to the audible sign, and the reverse, we meet with another objection to the proposed change. As our language was written with alphabetic characters, our words are too long and cumbrous for becoming mere symbols. A single character would be vastly superior to our *trissyllables* and *polysyllables.* If the new system prevails, we may soon expect a demand for reform in this respect. As it now is, the child must meet with all the difficulties that necessarily accompany the acquisition of the Chinese language, and these greatly increased by the forms of our words.

The defenders of the new system seem to lose sight of the nature and design of the alphabetic mode of writing, as an *invention.* To understand an invention, we must first know the law of nature which gave rise to it, and then the several parts of the invented system, as well as the adaptation of these parts, when combined, to accomplish some useful purpose. Thus, to explain the steam-engine, the chemical law by which water is converted into steam must first be understood, and in connection with it, that of elasticity, common to all aëriform bodies. Then follows — what constitutes the main point in this illustration — the explanation of the several parts of the machine, with the modes of combining them, so as to gain that immense power, which is found so valuable in the arts. Take another illustration, more nearly allied to the subject under consideration. It was discovered a few years since, that a piece of iron exposed, under given circumstances, to a galvanic current, would become a powerful magnet, and that it would cease to be such, the instant the current was intercepted. Little was it then thought, that this simple discovery would give rise to an invention by which the winged lightning, fit messenger of thought, could be employed to enable the inhabitants of Maine to converse with their otherwise distant neighbors in Louisiana, with almost as much ease, as though the parties were seated in the same parlor.

Now, no one will pretend, that to make use of the steam-engine successfully, all that is necessary is to gain an idea of it, as a *whole.* The several parts, with their various relations and combinations, must be explained. Equally necessary is it, in managing the magnetic telegraph, for the operator to be familiar with the laws of electricity, and the adaptation of the several parts of the machine, to accomplish, by means of that agent, the object proposed. But who would think of interpreting the results of its operation, the dots, the lines, the spaces, by looking upon them as constituting a single picture?

To apply these illustrations. It was discovered, ages ago, that Nature had endowed the organs of speech with the power of uttering a limited number of simple sounds. From this discovery originated the invention of letters to represent these elementary sounds. Letters constitute the *machinery* of the invention. They are the *tools* by which the art of reading is to be acquired; and a thorough knowledge of letters bears the same relation to reading, as does a thorough acquaintance with the parts of a steam-engine, or of the magnetic telegraph to a skilful use of these instruments. The new system proposes to abandon, for a time at least, all that is peculiar to this invention; all that distinguishes it from the rude and unphilosophical systems of symbolic writing, which, centuries ago, gave place to it, throughout every portion of the civilized world. Now, since such an estimate was placed upon this invention by the ancients, as to secure its adoption to the exclusion of all other methods of writing; and since a trial of many centuries has served only to confirm mankind in the belief of its superiority over every other system; we can but protest against the adoption of a mode of teaching, that subjects the child to such inconvenience and loss.

3d.—Mr. Mann has not been more unfortunate in blending spoken with written language, than in confounding the names of letters with their powers.

All his remarks, therefore, which proceed upon the supposition that the defenders of the old system advocate a plan of teaching, by which the *name-sounds* of letters are to be joined, as "l-e-g" into "elegy," can have no weight in the discussion of this question.

The word *letter*, as applied to the alphabet, is ambiguous, unless accompanied by some term, or explanatory phrase, to show what is intended. In referring to one of the elementary sounds which enters into the formation of a *spoken* word, we call that *sound* a letter; so, in speaking of the conventional sign, which represents that sound to the eye, as the character *h*, seen in a *printed* word, that sign we call a letter; both the sound and the sign, take the *name aitch*, for example; this *name*, in turn, is called a letter. Now, to prevent confusion, these three things, the power, the character, and the name, should be kept entirely distinct from each other. In a *spoken* word, elementary *sounds* are combined; in a *written* word, elementary *characters;* in neither written nor spoken words, are the *names* of letters joined, except in those instances, where the name and power are the same, as in the case of the long sounds of the vowels.

A perfect alphabet would require that the thirty-five elementary sounds of the language, as given by Dr. Rush, should have each one representative, and no more. With such an alphabet, the transition from the written, to the audible sign, would be made without the possibility of a mistake; and, equally certain would be the passage from the sound of a word, to its written sign, in which consists the art of spelling. But we have not such an alphabet. Ours is imperfect. A single letter has several different sounds; the same sound is represented by different letters and combinations of letters, and many of the letters in some of their uses become silent· These anomalies are the cause of inconveniences as sensibly felt by the defenders of the old system, as by those who, to effect, for the child, a temporary escape from one difficulty, would thrust him into others equally great. The defenders of both systems agree that these difficulties must, at some time, be met and mastered.

Were a language reduced to writing by means of a perfect alphabet even, it is not difficult to see how, in time, that alphabet would become corrupted. It is probable that, at the time of the invention of letters, it was intended that each character should represent but one sound. But, as the sounds of the language to be written were better analyzed, either new letters, as among the Greeks, were added, or, the same letter was made to represent more than one sound.

Again, different nations have adopted the same alphabetic characters; but in applying them to the elementary sounds of their respective languages, the rules of uniformity were disregarded; thus, the sound represented by *e* in English, is represented by *i* in French, and so of others. Then, as the words of one country, like its citizens, may emigrate to, and become naturalized in another, retaining, in the latter, their original orthography and pronunciation, new sounds must inevitably be attached to the same letter; hence, the French sound of *i* in *fatigue.* In the same way, many equivocal words have been introduced into our language; thus, *bark*, derived from a Saxon word, means the noise made by dogs; so, again, the same word, derived from the French *barque*, signifies a vessel, while the Danish word *bark*, signifying the covering of a tree, has been introduced, unchanged, into the language; all of which give three widely different meanings to the same word. Add to these circumstances, the mutations to which every language is subject, from age to age, and it is easy to account for such changes as are seen in the words, *could*, *would*, *should*, and others, in which the *l* was sounded by the generation before us; so also, usage requires us to retain the silent letters of such words as *catarrh*, *phthisic*, and many others derived from the ancient languages, that their etymology may not be lost.

These various changes have created the necessity of referring to the same alphabetic *character* and *name* some two, three, or more elementary sounds; thus *ce* is the *name* of the character *c;* to this name and character we are obliged to refer a hissing sound, which is also represented by *s;* another sound represented by *k;* and still a third, represented by *z.* Another evil arising from such mutations, is, that many letters, having become silent, must be retained in the formation of the written sign, although worse than useless in determining the audible.

Such being the three-fold meaning to be attached to the word letter, and such being the condition to which various circumstances have conspired to reduce our alphabet, let us inquire, if Mr. Mann has not been led astray, by neglecting to make these necessary distinctions.

He says, on page 92:

> "The advocate for teaching the letters asks, if the elements of an art or science should not be first taught. To this I would reply, that the 'Names of the Letters' are not elements in the sounds of words; or are so, only in a comparatively small number of cases. To the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, the child is taught to give twenty-six sounds, and no more. According to Worcester, however, — who may be considered one of the best authorities on this subject, — the six vowels only, have, collectively, thirty-three different sounds. In addition to these, there are the sounds of twenty consonants, of diphthongs and triphthongs."

Before proceeding to show that the secretary has confounded those things which should be kept distinct from each other, it is necessary to correct an erroneous statement which he has made, respecting the number of different sounds in the language. It is not true, nor does Worcester, anywhere, as we can find, assert, that "the six vowels only, have, collectively, thirty-three *different* sounds." It *is* true that he assigns to *a*, seven sounds, — to *e*, five, — to *i*, five, — to *o*, six, — to *u*, six, — and to *y*, four; and that these several numbers when added, amount to thirty-three. But if any one will take the pains to compare the sounds of *y* with those of *i*, those of *a* with those of *e*, and so on, he will find an illustration of what we have already said; that the same sound is represented by different letters; and if he will go still further, and select from Worcester's table of vowel sounds, the *different* ones *only*, he will find less than half thirty-three. A little further on, he proceeds to say that "it would be difficult, and would not compensate the trouble, to compute the number of *different* sounds which a good speaker gives to the different letters, and combinations of letters, in our language, — not including the changes of rhetorical emphasis, cadence, and intonation. But, if analyzed, they would be found to amount to hundreds." Here, it seems, he has fallen into the same error; and his statements are calculated to mislead the reader. The greatest number of elementary sounds in our language does not exceed forty-three. Barber gives the number forty-three; others, forty-one. But Dr. Rush, who probably gave more time and thought to the analysis of the human voice, than any other person, fixes the number at thirty-five. Never, before, have we known it placed as high as hundreds. We have been the more careful to make these corrections, that the reader may see how much weight to attach to Mr. Mann's remarks on the 97th page of the report, where he makes use of these erroneous statements, to show a want of analogy between teaching reading, on the one hand, and written music, on the other. He says:

> "Some defenders of the old system have attempted to find an analogy for their practice, in the mode of teaching to sing by first learning the gamut. They compare the notes of the gamut which are afterwards to be combined into tunes, to the letters of the alphabet to be afterwards combined into words. But one or two considerations will show the greatest difference between the principal case and the supposed analogy. In written music there is always a scale consisting of at least five lines, and of course with four spaces between, and often one or two lines and spaces, above or below the regular scale; and both the name of a note and the sound to be given it can always be known by observing its place in the scale. To make the cases analogous, there should be a scale of thirty-three places at least, for the six vowels only, — and this scale should be enlarged so as to admit the twenty consonants, and all their combinations with the vowels. Such a scale could hardly be crowded into an octavo page. The largest pages now used would not contain more than a single printed line each; and the matter now contained in an octavo volume would fill the shelves of a good-sized library. If music were taught as unphilosophically as reading; — if its eight notes were first arranged in one straight vertical line, to be learned by name, and then transferred to a straight horizontal line, where they should follow each other promiscuously, and without any clew to the particular sound to be given them in each particular place, it seems not too much to say that not one man in a hundred thousand would ever become a musician."

Here the reader will see that Mr. Mann has compared an erroneous conception of the elements of our language, with an erroneous conception of the elements of written music. A scale of *thirty-three* places, at least, for the six vowels only! And this scale so *enlarged* as to admit the twenty consonants, and all their *combinations with the vowels!* It will suffice to say, concerning this scale, that it must be very much reduced; so that he need not be alarmed at the cumbrous size to which our books may attain. But, Mr. Mann seems to be entirely unacquainted with the nature and difficulties of written music, or, at least, he has given, if any at all, a very imperfect and erroneous exhibition of them.

In the science of Music, the Natural or Diatonic scale, consists of eight sounds or tones. The five intermediate tones furnished by the Chromatic scale, added to these, increase the number to thirteen different sounds.

The compass of the human voice, if cultivated, is sufficient to embrace about two and a half octaves, or from thirty to thirty-five different sounds. With instruments, the number of different sounds may be extended almost without limit. We are concerned, however, with the human voice. It will be seen that the number of sounds which are to be represented by visible symbols, in music, is about the same as the number of elementary sounds in our language. It will be seen, moreover, that it is not one "scale," [staff?] with its added lines, that can represent these thirty or thirty-five different sounds. There is a staff for the Base, one for the Tenor, and one for the Alto and Soprano. Besides, it should be understood, that a note on a given line or space, affected by a flat or sharp, is sounded in the former case, half a tone higher, and in the latter, half a tone lower, than it otherwise would be; or, in other words, it can have, without changing its position in the staff, three different sounds. But, it is not in this particular, that the principal difficulty consists. A note placed on the letter C, for example, will, in all cases, receive the same absolute sound. It now stands as 1, or the key note, and the syllable *do*, is applied to it. Let F be sharped, and then, although this note still has the same sound as before, its relation to the other notes is entirely changed. It now becomes 4 of the scale, and the syllable *fa* is applied to it. Let C now be sharped, and the note still remains unchanged on the staff, but the original sound is lost from the scale; the note which then represented it, becomes 7 of the scale, and is called *si.* Next, let D be sharped, and a similar change takes place, and so on, till all the notes are sharped. Again, taking the scale as at first, let B be affected by a flat, and the original key-note becomes 5 of the scale, and is called *sol;* then let E be flatted, and so on, till all the notes have been flatted, and changes of relation will take place for every successive flat. Now, a change of this kind, affects the relation, not of one merely, but of every note of the scale, and the number of changes far exceeds the highest number of sounds attached to any letter of the alphabet. If any one will take the trouble to estimate the whole number of such changes, for all the notes, he will discover some of the difficulties to be overcome by the pupil in this branch of science. Each transposition of the scale is equivalent to giving a new sound to each note; it does give a new name, and a new relation. The only point, therefore, in which the analogy fails, is this: the number of changes which a note may undergo, is much greater than the number of sounds represented by any letter; and the labor of acquiring the notes of music, is very *much* greater than that of learning the letters of the alphabet. Such, certainly, is the opinion of the ablest professors of music in our country.

In respect to emphasis, pauses, and expression, reading and music are analogous; and so, in regard to the elements, in all essential points, they resemble each other So much has been said, to correct an erroneous statement, and the conclusion drawn from it. Let us now inquire, if the secretary has not fallen into an error, equally inexcusable, from a misconception of the several functions of a letter. We understand him tacitly to concede the principle, that "the elements of an art or science should be first taught." But, in his subsequent remarks, if we comprehend their design, he denies, that the defenders of the old system are entitled to this conceded principle, because the *names* of the letters are not elements in the sounds of words. We never supposed, nor do we know of a single advocate of the old system, who ever supposed, that the *names* of letters, entered into the formation of words; as, h-a-t, into *aitchaitee;* "l-e-g," into "elegy."

Names were not given to letters for such a purpose. They were assigned to them, for the same reason that names are given to other objects, to aid us in referring to the objects themselves. One would scarcely expect to convince even a child, that there was neither pastry, fruit, cinnamon, nor sugar, in the pie he was eating, by telling him that pies are never made of such names as *pastry*, *cinnamon*, &c.

We agree with Mr. Mann, when he says that, with the exception of the long sounds of the vowels, "the 'Names of the Letters' are not elements in the sounds of words;" but we differ from him, if he denies that the *characters*, called letters, are elements in printed words, or that the *sounds* which they represent, are elements in spoken words. One, or both of these two things are implied, when it is asserted, that letters are elements in the formation of words.

The question then returns. Should not letters be taught before words; since, in two important respects, they are elements?

The argument, found upon the next four or five pages of the report, proceeds upon the supposition that the *name-sounds* of letters, are combined into words; and if it will avail the secretary anything, we are ready to grant that he has fully shown, what would have been most cheerfully admitted at the outset, that "the *names* of the letters, are not elements in the sounds of words." But when he, in apparent triumph, says, "this, surely, is a most disastrous application of the principle, that the elements of a science must be first taught," we cannot resist the conviction, that his is a most disastrous application of logic, to the true question at issue. That the fallacy in his argument, consists in confounding the *names* and *powers* of letters, is obvious from the following: "To the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, the child is taught to give twenty-six sounds, and no more." Now, if he means that he has discovered the fact, that instructers, everywhere, have fallen into the palpable error of teaching children, that to the twenty-six alphabetic characters, only twenty-six *elementary sounds* are attached, the wonder is, since he believes there are hundreds of such sounds, that he has not, by his journal, or otherwise, sought to correct such defective instruction. But, if he means, by the "twenty-six sounds, and no more," merely the sounds given to the *names* of the letters, he has either accused the teachers of this country of totally neglecting one essential function of the letters, or else, he himself has failed to make the proper distinction between the *name* of a letter, and its *power*. If the former is the meaning, and if he intended the above remark as a rebuke to teachers for neglecting to give the elements of sound, as well as the *names* of letters, we reply that, though it may, to some extent, be deserved, it is too unqualified. There are not a few instructers, who teach the children to associate together, the names, the forms, and the powers of the letters. But, what surprises us most, if this be the meaning, is, that Mr. Mann should discover from such defective instruction, reasons for a *total* neglect of the alphabet, till after the child has learned to read. Some teachers may neglect to require the meaning of words. Is this a reason why words should be entirely set aside, till the child can first read whole paragraphs?

The most probable interpretation of the passage, is, that Mr. Mann did not have in his mind a clear perception of the difference between the name-sound of a letter, and its power. This explanation is rendered still more probable from the following allusion to the Greek letters: "Will the names of the letters, *kappa*, *omicron*, *sigma*, *mu*, *omicron*, *sigma*, make the word kosmos?" Has any defender of the old system ever asserted that they would? Yet, would the secretary have us suppose that if those names should fall upon the ear of one familiar with the Greek alphabet, he would not, at once, utter kosmos as the combination of the elementary sounds which those letters *name.*

If these quotations fail to convince the reader; let him take the following passage on the 33d page of Mr. Mann's lecture:

> "The faculty of judgment, the power by which we trace relations between causes and effects, and by which we expect the same results from the same antecedents, will be perpetually baffled if we attempt to spell words according to the vocal power, or *name sound*, as it is sometimes called, of the letters as presented in the alphabet; or, if we infer, that one word should be spelled so or so, because another is spelled so or so."

Here it will be seen that he makes the *vocal power* of a letter, and its *name-sound* identical; that is, he has defined the meaning of *vocal power*, as he understands it. The *name-sound* of a letter is the sound given to its name, as the sound of the syllable *be*, *ce*, *em*, &c.; whereas, the *vocal power* of a letter is the sound that letter receives in combination, as the sound of *b*, in *b* ut, *b* ate. The reader can determine the sound, by directing the attention to what precedes the sound of *ut*, in the former, and *ate*, in the latter example. In this instance, the blending of the *name* and *power* is not left as a matter of inference. Let any one carefully examine the pages of the secretary's report, from the 92d to the 99th, and he will find many other examples of the same error.

But, we apprehend that Mr. Mann has been induced to bring forward, once more, his theory of teaching words before letters, from what he saw in the Prussian schools. He says:

> "When I first began to visit the Prussian schools, I uniformly inquired of the teachers, whether in teaching children to read, they began with the 'Names of the Letters,' as given in the alphabet. Being delighted with the prompt negative which I invariably received,

I persevered in making the inquiry, until I began to perceive a look and tone on their part not very flattering to my intelligence, in considering a point so clear and so well settled as this, to be any longer a subject for discussion or doubt. The uniform statement was, that the alphabet, as such, had ceased to be taught, as an exercise, preliminary to reading, for the last fifteen or twenty years, by every teacher in the kingdom. Whoever will compare the German language with the English, will see that the reasons for a change are much stronger in regard to our own, than in regard to the foreign tongue."

Now, we have supposed the word *alphabet* to be a generic term, including all the letters of the alphabet; and that each letter has the three-fold meaning already attached to it. But, if in Prussia, it signifies simply the *names* of the letters, we will endeavor to bear that in mind. If we compare the Prussian mode of teaching children to read, as described by Mr. Mann, with the following portion of the above statement, it will be seen that alphabet, as there used, can mean nothing more than the names of the letters. " The uniform statement was," he says, " that the *alphabet*, as such, had ceased to be taught as an exercise preliminary to reading, for the last fifteen or twenty years, by every teacher in the kingdom." According to his description of their method of teaching children to read, it appears that the *forms* of the letters were first taught, then their *powers*, and finally the art of combining the forms into *written* words, and the *powers* into spoken words ; so that nothing can be left for the meaning of *alphabet*, as here used, but the *names* of letters. But, we ask, if teaching the forms and powers of the letters, is not teaching the alphabet, or all in it, that is absolutely essential to *reading?* To teach the whole alphabet, as we understand it, is to teach all that belongs to it, not omitting the names of the letters, as do the Prussian teachers, at first.

It appears from the last sentence of the above quotation, that Mr. Mann thinks, if such a change as the omission of the *names* of letters was needed in Prussia, a comparison of the German and English languages will show a greater demand for a change in the latter. What change, we ask ? Such an one as theirs ?

Let the following passage answer:

> "There are two reasons why this *lautir*, or *phonic* method, [that is, the method of the Prussian and Saxon teachers, just described,] is less adapted to the English language than to the German; — first, because our vowels have more sounds than theirs, and secondly, because we have more silent letters than they. This is an argument, not against their method of teaching, but in favor of our commencing to teach by giving words before letters. And I despair of any effective improvement in teaching young children to read, until the teachers of our primary schools shall qualify themselves to teach in this manner; — I say until they shall *qualify* themselves, for they may attempt it in such a rude and awkward way as will infallibly incur a failure. As an accompaniment to this, they should also be able to give instruction according to the *lautir* or *phonic* method."

Now, how the secretary could discover, from the purely alphabetic and elementary method of teaching which he witnessed in Prussia, reasons for *such* a change, one which converts our language into Chinese, we cannot easily conceive. It is true, that he adds, "as an accompaniment to this, they [teachers] should also be able to give instruction according to the lautir or phonic method." But this seems to be only a secondary consideration; they should be *able* to do it. Besides, from the description of the new system which he has given, and sanctioned as given by others, it would seem that this kind of instruction could not well be given till the child can read easy sentences. Were it not for two reasons, which affect the question in degree, only, not in kind, Mr. Mann, it appears, would recommend that we adopt the Prussian method. But these reasons shall be considered in their appropriate place.

Mr. Mann has been led, as we believe, to recommend anew, this system of teaching words before letters — a system as wide asunder from the Prussian, as are the poles from each other — imply from confounding the names of letters with their powers. They, at first, omit the names of the letters, or, as he affirms that they say, "the alphabet." But they teach every thing else that belongs to a letter, and, probably, soon after, the names themselves.

And, now why should the *name* be omitted? To neglect the names of letters is to destroy, at once, one of the most important exercises of the primary school; that is, oral spelling. That letters must have names to aid us in referring to them, no one will deny. Otherwise, how could Mr. Mann have read such a passage as the following from his lecture? "*Ph* is *f;* and *c* is uniformly concealed in *s*, or sacrificed as a victim to *k* or *z*." Did he give simply the powers of the letters *f*, *c*, *s*, *k*, and *z?* or, did he hold up a card and point them out? or, did he speak their *names*? If, then, letters must have names, why should the child be kept in ignorance of them? One of the first inquiries of a child, on seeing a new object is, "What is it?" "What do you call it?" or, in other words, "What is its name?" Shall such inquiries be silenced, when made respecting the alphabet?

Besides, the names of the letters, in most cases, must, when spoken, *differ from their powers;* that is, the name of a letter and its power cannot be identical. Yet, it is evident, from the following quotation from the 96th page of the report, that there exists in the mind of the secretary an impression that the usefulness of the alphabet, in teaching reading, is very much diminished, from the want of a perfect coincidence between the powers of the letters and their name-sounds: "I believe it is within bounds to say, that we do not sound the letters in reading once in a hundred times, as we were taught to sound them when learning the alphabet. Indeed, were we to do so in one tenth part of the instances, we should be understood by nobody. What analogy can be pointed out between the rough breathing of the letter *h*, in the words *when*, *where*, *how*, &c., and the 'name-sound,' (aytch, aitch, or aych, as it is given by different spelling-book compilers,) of that letter, as it is taught from the alphabet?" Will the secretary give a name to *h*, or *p*, or *b;* or indeed to any of the consonants, which shall sound exactly like the power of the letter? We mean one that can become sufficiently audible to subserve all the purposes of a name; one that can be represented to the eye, like the name of any other object? Why should not a letter have a name, as well as a peach? And if so, why should the name of the letter resemble that letter, any more than the name of the peach should resemble that fruit? We can see no *necessity* for such resemblance. True, the name of a letter, when uttered, is a sound; and the power is a sound; and for the most part, a different one; so is thunder itself very different from the sound of its name; yet we never complain of that name as inadequate to call to mind the idea of thunder. The Greeks have nowhere, as we have seen, complained of any difficulty in associating their dissyllables, *alpha*, *beta*, *gamma*, *delta;* and trissyllables, *omicron* and *omega*, with the elements of sound to which they refer. Yet how untoward are these names, compared with ours. The resemblance between the names of most of our letters and their powers is so marked, as to afford no little assistance in combining letters into words. The dissimilarity, of which so much complaint has been made, might never have been mentioned, had it not been for such resemblances as now exist. The names of the vowels, and their long sounds, with the exception of *y*, are the same. The names of most of the consonants contain the elementary sound joined to a vowel, which either precedes or follows it. And here, we see again, the same want of distinction as before. "And again," says Mr. Mann, "in giving the names of the consonants, why should the vowel be sometimes prefixed, and sometimes suffixed?" So on the 98th page, he says:

> "There is one fact, probably within every teacher's own observation, which should be decisive on this subject. In learning the alphabet, children pronounce the consonants as though they were either preceded or followed by one of the vowels; — that is, they sound *b*, as though it were written *be*, and *f*, as though written *ef*. But when they have advanced ever so little way in reading, do they not enunciate words where the letter *b* is followed by one of the *other* vowels, or where it is *preceded* by a vowel, as well as words into which their own familiar sound of *be*, enters? For example, though they have called *b* a thousand times as if it were written *be*, do they not enunciate the words *ball*, *bind*, *box*, *bug*, &c. as well as they do the words *besom*, *beatific*, &c.? They do not say *be-all*, *be-ind*, *be-ox*, *be-ug*, *&c.*"

the animal, with which the child has labored long and hard to become acquainted, were liable to change their natures as soon as they were brought into juxtaposition, as almost all the letters of the alphabet do, when combined into words;" that is, whole words should be taught first, if each letter had but one sound; "still more," *a fortiori*, is it necessary so to teach them, since such is not the fact. And hence, we say, if words should be taught in this way, numbers, music, and every other art and science should be taught in the same way. If Mr. Mann still denies the aptness of the comparison, he makes the argument, drawn from the "natural order," as it is called, rest entirely on the imperfections of the alphabet, which forms one of the distinct arguments to be considered hereafter. The only difference which he has pointed out, certainly comes from that source; as any one will see by referring to the 98th page of the report. A denial, therefore, of the pertinency of this comparison, is equivalent to giving up that part of the argument now under consideration. If, on the other hand, he acknowledges the aptness of the comparison, and recommends that the decimal system of numeration be treated in this manner, every one will see, that it loses all that gives it a superiority over the Greek or Roman numerals. The evil which would result, from the extension of this principle, to other branches of knowledge, could not be estimated.

Moreover, the illustration drawn from the animal, or a tree which is more commonly given, fails, we think, to meet all that is required in teaching a child to read. Grant, that he does not, in learning to distinguish a tree from a rock, or any other dissimilar object, form his idea of it, by inspecting the parts separately, and then by combining trunk, bark, branches, twigs, leaves, and blossoms. In learning to read, however, he is to distinguish between objects which resemble each other; and in many instances, very closely, as in the case of the words, *hand*, *band; now*, *mow; form*, *from;* and scores of others. To make the illustration good, it would be necessary to place the child in a forest, containing some seventy thousand trees, made up of various genera, species, and varieties, among which were found many to be distinguished only by the slightest differences. Or, if it will suit the case any better, let him be placed in a grove, containing seven hundred trees, having, as before, strong resemblances; if, then, this general survey of each of them, as a whole object, will enable him to distinguish them rapidly from each other, whatever may be their size, or the order in which he may cast his eyes upon them, we will acknowledge the aptness of the illustration. Primary school teachers, who have tried the system, testify, that when children have learned a word in one connection, they are unable to recognise it in another, especially if there be a change of type.

As Mr. Mann has, virtually, denied the right of extending the principle of teaching a compound first, and the elements subsequently, to music and numeration, and, as his reasons for that denial are drawn from the present imperfect state of the alphabet, we may infer that he relies, mainly, if not solely, on the latter branch of the argument.

We will, therefore, next consider the *second* reason urged in favor of the new system. It may be thus stated. 'Such is the imperfect condition of the alphabet, that the letters, when combined into words, do not, with certainty, lead the learner to the correct pronunciation; whereas, by teaching words before letters, all this uncertainty is avoided.'

That the alphabet is imperfect, we have already conceded. The nature of these imperfections, we will repeat. 1st. — A single character may represent several different sounds. 2d. — A single sound, may be represented by several different characters, either separate or combined. 3d. — A letter may be silent. These anomalies are, to children, a source of much perplexity and doubt. We fully appreciate the difficulties arising from them, and as heartily deplore their existence, as can the authors of the proposed remedy. And here, two questions arise. The first is this; 'Is the condition of the alphabet a sufficient cause for any material change in the modes of teaching children to read?' And the second, 'Does it afford sufficient reasons for *such* a change as the one proposed?'

In answering the first question, we are prepared to say unhesitatingly, that the mode of teaching letters before words, is the only true and philosophical one. Letters, as we have already shown, are elements in the formation of words. That the elements of an art or science should first be taught, no one in the least acquainted with teaching, will pretend to deny. To proceed from known elements to their unknown combinations, is natural and easy; it is the only course that will ensure a thorough acquaintance with any subject. Hence, we say, no *material* change should take place. But in making the child acquainted with the letters and the modes of combining them, we are not sure that the best methods have always been adopted. A letter is not understood until its *visible symbol*, its *name* and its *power*, are associated together. It is the custom, in many primary schools, to teach at first, only the *name* and *symbol*, and to leave the power to be learned by imitation or inference, when the child begins to combine letters into syllables or words. For example; the learner readily pronounces the names of the letters h-i-v-e, but being ignorant of their powers, he hesitates; the teacher says, pronounce; the child still hesitates; the teacher utters *hive*, as the combination of these four letters, and the child is then left to receive only a twilight conception of the powers of those letters. The Prussian method, it appears, consists in presenting the *symbol* and the *power*, leaving the name to be learned afterwards. This method has the advantage of bringing the *powers* of the letters, at an early period, to the notice of the child, in a manner so distinct and vivid, as to impress them indelibly upon his memory; and must give him great facility in the process of mental combination. The omission of the name, however, lies at the root of oral spelling, and endangers the acquisition of that important branch.

A third method, and one which will, we think, commend itself to the favorable regard of all who examine it, is that in which the three attributes of a letter are at once associated together. The advantages of this method, and the modes of interesting children in it, are topics which will be more fully discussed in another place. While we deny, therefore, that any material change should take place, we cheerfully admit, that some such improvements as named above may be made in the manner of teaching the letters.

The second question is, 'Do the imperfections of the alphabet afford sufficient reasons for *such* a change as the one proposed?' We have already said, that no material change, in our opinion, should take place. But others think differently, and have proceeded both to devise, and strongly recommend, the plan under consideration. To this method of teaching we are opposed, for the following reasons:

1st.—Teaching whole words according to the new plan, to any extent whatever, gives the child no facility for learning new ones. Every word must be taken upon authority, until the alphabet is learned.

2d.—Since the alphabet must, at some period, be acquired, with all its imperfections, it is but a poor relief, to compel the child, at first, to associate seven hundred different, arbitrary forms with the ideas which they represent, and then to learn the alphabet itself.

Mr. Mann was sensible of this objection to his new theory, when he said, in his second annual report, (Common School Journal, Vol. I. page 327,)

> "There is a fact, however, which may, perhaps, in part, cancel the differences, here pointed out. The alphabet must be learned, at some time, because there are various occasions, besides those of consulting dictionaries or cyclopædias, where the regular sequence of the letters must be known; and possibly it may be thought, that it will be as difficult to learn the letters, after learning the words, as before. But the fact, which deprives this consideration of some part at least of its validity, is, that it always greatly facilitates an acquisition of the names of objects, or persons, to have been conversant with their forms and appearances beforehand. The learning of words is an introduction to an acquaintance with the letters composing them."

To learn to associate readily the form of a word with its meaning, is as difficult a task, for aught we can see, as it would be to associate the form and name of a letter with its power. It will be said that the former exercise affords the learner pleasure, and therefore attracts his attention and interests him. We have already expressed our sentiments on the policy of consulting the pleasure of a child, at the expense of his real good. If it can be shown, however, that, of two methods equally good in other respects, one has the additional recommendation of pleasing the child, and the other has *not*, we should, by all means, choose the former. But all these remarks about the pleasure resulting from the new mode of teaching, grow out of the supposition, that learning the alphabet is totally destitute of interest.

This impression is not correct. And it is somewhat surprising, that the defenders of the new system do not see, when speaking of the alphabet, as destitute of interest, that a striking analogy exists between the power of a letter and its visible symbol, on the one hand, and the meaning of a word and its symbol, on the other.

That children are constantly uttering the elementary sounds of the language, before learning the letters, is obvious to every one. They must have some knowledge of them. So says Mr. Mann, on page 93 of the report: " Generally speaking, too, before a child begins to learn his letters, he is already acquainted with the majority of elementary sounds in the language, and is in the daily habit of using them in conversation." It may be said of a letter, then, with as much propriety as of a word, that it is " familiar to the ear, the tongue, and the mind." The eye is not acquainted with the visible symbol. If, then, such old acquaintances can introduce the child to the stranger (the visible representative) in one case, why not in the other? If the one exercise affords pleasure, why not the other? The latter may not to the same extent, as the former. We have made these comparisons for the benefit of those who insist so much on pleasing children.

But in interesting children, much depends upon the modes of teaching. It is not necessary to teach the alphabet invariably from the vertical column. Letters may be made upon the black-board ; and the children may be allowed to make them on the slate, or on the board. Again, the teacher may be supplied with small pieces of card, each containing a letter ; or, with metallic letters, which may be handled. Let these be kept in a small box or basket, and when a class is called upon to recite, let the teacher hold up one of these letters. One of the class utters its name ; let him then be required to utter its *power* also. The same should afterwards be exacted of the whole class, in concert. The teacher should then give the letter to the successful pupil. Let this exercise be repeated till all the letters are distributed. The pupils now, one by one, return the letters to the teacher, who counts the number belonging to each, and awards praise where it belongs. Children may be deeply interested in exercises of this kind, and at the same time be laying the foundation for a thorough course of instruction in reading. Then, let the teacher present some two or three letters, so arranged, as to spell a familiar word ; as *ox*, *cat*, *dog*. The pupils should be required first, to utter the names of the letters thus arranged ; next, their powers ; then, to join those powers into the audible sign which will call to mind the object named.

3d. — Another objection to converting our language into Chinese, arises from the *change* which must inevitably take place in the modes of associating the printed word with the idea which it represents, when the child is taught to regard words as composed of elements. Children, at first, learn to recognise the word, by the new method, as a single picture, not as composed of parts ; and for aught we know, they begin in the middle of it and examine each way. It is not probable that they proceed invariably from left to right, as in the old mode. However that may be, an entire change must take place when they begin to learn words, as composed of letters. The attention, then, is directed to the parts of which words are composed.

While the eye is employed in combining the visible characters, the mind unites the powers which they represent, and the organs of speech are prompt to execute, what the eye and the mind have simultaneously prepared for them. The mode of association in a symbolic language, if we mistake not, is this: The single picture is associated arbitrarily, yet directly, with the *idea;* the *idea* is then associated with its audible sign; this sign being familiar to the child, is readily uttered. In a phonetic language, it is different. The attention being directed to the letters and their powers, the child is conducted immediately to the audible sign; this when uttered, or thought of, suggests the idea. Whether or not these are the correct views, is immaterial to the argument. All that is claimed is, that a *change* takes place in the modes of association, as soon as the child begins to combine letters into words. It is of this *change* we complain. All will acknowledge the importance of forming in the child, correct habits of association, such as will not need revolutionizing at a subsequent period in life. On this point, we cannot forbear quoting the excellent remarks of the secretary, relating to the subject of spelling. After recommending a certain natural and simple mode of classifying words, he proceeds to say:* "On such lessons as these, scholars will very rarely spell wrong. They can go through the book twenty times while they would go through a common spelling-book once; and each time will *rivet the association*, that is, it will make an ally of the almost *unconquerable force of habit.* A connection will be established between the general idea of the word and its component letters, which it will be nearly impossible to dissolve. In pursuing any study or art, it is of the *greatest importance to have the first* movements, whether of the eye, the hand, or the tongue, *right.* The end will be soonest obtained to submit to *any delay that exactness* may require. We all know with what tenacity *first impressions* retain their hold upon the mind. When in a strange place, if we mistake the points of compass, it is almost impossible to rectify the error; and it becomes a contest which of the two parties will hold out longest, the natural points of the compass, in their position, or we in our false impressions. So if, in geography, we get an idea that a city is on the west bank of a river, when it is on the east, it is almost as practicable to transfer the city itself, bodily, to the side of the river where it seems to belong, as it is to unclench our own impressions, and make them conform to its true location. These illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely." It seems to us that, as one of these illustrations, the subject under consideration must be legitimately ranked.

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4th. — The new system fails to accomplish the object which it proposes. The main design of this mode of teaching seems to be, to escape the ambiguity arising from the variety of sounds which attach to some of the letters, as well as from the variety of forms by which the same sounds may be represented.

The defenders of this system seem to forget, since these anomalies are elementary, that they must be carried into the formation of words. Thus, we can represent a single elementary sound, first by *ā*, then by *ai*, and again, by *ei;* hence, we can form three different words; as *vane*, *vain*, *vein*. In a similar manner we have, *rain*, *reign*, *rein; wright*, *write*, *right*, *rite;* and hundreds of others. It will be seen at once, that it must be as difficult for a child to attach the same sound to four different pictures called words, as to four different pictures called letters. Hence, it is plain, that we have "harlequins" among words; as well as among letters. The only difference is, that the former are more numerous, yet the legitimate offspring of the latter. We have "masqueraders," too, among words. Let the sound represented by the four letters, r-i-t-e, fall upon the child's ear, and he may think, either, of a ceremony, of making letters with a pen, of justice, or of a workman. Again, let either the printed or spoken word *pound*, for example, be given; and he may think of an enclosure for stray cattle, of striking a blow, of certain weights, as avoirdupois, apothecaries', or Troy weight, and also, of a denomination of money. To illusthe animal, with which the child has labored long and hard to become acquainted, were liable to change their natures as soon as they were brought into juxtaposition, as almost all the letters of the alphabet do, when combined into words;" that is, whole words should be taught first, if each letter had but one sound; "still more," *a fortiori*, is it necessary so to teach them, since such is not the fact. And hence, we say, if words should be taught in this way, numbers, music, and every other art and science should be taught in the same way. If Mr. Mann still denies the aptness of the comparison, he makes the argument, drawn from the "natural order," as it is called, rest entirely on the imperfections of the alphabet, which forms one of the distinct arguments to be considered hereafter. The only difference which he has pointed out, certainly comes from that source; as any one will see by referring to the 98th page of the report. A denial, therefore, of the pertinency of this comparison, is equivalent to giving up that part of the argument now under consideration. If, on the other hand, he acknowledges the aptness of the comparison, and recommends that the decimal system of numeration be treated in this manner, every one will see, that it loses all that gives it a superiority over the Greek or Roman numerals. The evil which would result, from the extension of this principle, to other branches of knowledge, could not be estimated.

Moreover, the illustration drawn from the animal, or a tree which is more commonly given, fails, we think, to meet all that is required in teaching a child to read. Grant, that he does not, in learning to distinguish a tree from a rock, or any other dissimilar object, form his idea of it, by inspecting the parts separately, and then by combining trunk, bark, branches, twigs, leaves, and blossoms. In learning to read, however, he is to distinguish between objects which resemble each other; and in many instances, very closely, as in the case of the words, *hand*, *band; now*, *mow; form*, *from;* and scores of others. To make the illustration good, it would be necessary to place the child in a forest, containing some seventy thousand trees, made up of various genera, species, and varieties, among which were found many to be distinguished only by the slightest differences. Or, if it will suit the case any better, let him be placed in a grove, containing seven hundred trees, having, as before, strong resemblances; if, then, this general survey of each of them, as a whole object, will enable him to distinguish them rapidly from each other, whatever may be their size, or the order in which he may cast his eyes upon them, we will acknowledge the aptness of the illustration. Primary school teachers, who have tried the system, testify, that when children have learned a word in one connection, they are unable to recognise it in another, especially if there be a change of type.

As Mr. Mann has, virtually, denied the right of extending the principle of teaching a compound first, and the elements subsequently, to music and numeration, and, as his reasons for that denial are drawn from the present imperfect state of the alphabet, we may infer that he relies, mainly, if not solely, on the latter branch of the argument.

We will, therefore, next consider the *second* reason urged in favor of the new system. It may be thus stated. 'Such is the imperfect condition of the alphabet, that the letters, when combined into words, do not, with certainty, lead the learner to the correct pronunciation; whereas, by teaching words before letters, all this uncertainty is avoided.'

That the alphabet is imperfect, we have already conceded. The nature of these imperfections, we will repeat. 1st. — A single character may represent several different sounds. 2d. — A single sound, may be represented by several different characters, either separate or combined. 3d. — A letter may be silent. These anomalies are, to children, a source of much perplexity and doubt. We fully appreciate the difficulties arising from them, and as heartily deplore their existence, as can the authors of the proposed remedy. And here, two questions arise. The first is this; 'Is the condition of the alphabet a sufficient cause for any material change in the modes of teaching children to read?' And the second, 'Does it afford sufficient reasons for *such* a change as the one proposed?'

In answering the first question, we are prepared to say unhesitatingly, that the mode of teaching letters before words, is the only true and philosophical one. Letters, as we have already shown, are elements in the formation of words. That the elements of an art or science should first be taught, no one in the least acquainted with teaching, will pretend to deny. To proceed from known elements to their unknown combinations, is natural and easy; it is the only course that will ensure a thorough acquaintance with any subject. Hence, we say, no *material* change should take place. But in making the child acquainted with the letters and the modes of combining them, we are not sure that the best methods have always been adopted. A letter is not understood until its *visible symbol*, its *name* and its *power*, are associated together. It is the custom, in many primary schools, to teach at first, only the *name* and *symbol*, and to leave the power to be learned by imitation or inference, when the child begins to combine letters into syllables or words. For example; the learner readily pronounces the names of the letters h-i-v-e, but being ignorant of their powers, he hesitates; the teacher says, pronounce; the child still hesitates; the teacher utters *hive*, as the combination of these four letters, and the child is then left to receive only a twilight conception of the powers of those letters. The Prussian method, it appears, consists in presenting the *symbol* and the *power*, leaving the name to be learned afterwards. This method has the advantage of bringing the *powers* of the letters, at an early period, to the notice of the child, in a manner so distinct and vivid, as to impress them indelibly upon his memory; and must give him great facility in the process of mental combination. The omission of the name, however, lies at the root of oral spelling, and endangers the acquisition of that important branch.

A third method, and one which will, we think, commend itself to the favorable regard of all who examine it, is that in which the three attributes of a letter are at once associated together. The advantages of this method, and the modes of interesting children in it, are topics which will be more fully discussed in another place. While we deny, therefore, that any material change should take place, we cheerfully admit, that some such improvements as named above may be made in the manner of teaching the letters.

The second question is, 'Do the imperfections of the alphabet afford sufficient reasons for *such* a change as the one proposed?' We have already said, that no material change, in our opinion, should take place. But others think differently, and have proceeded both to devise, and strongly recommend, the plan under consideration. To this method of teaching we are opposed, for the following reasons:

1st. — Teaching whole words according to the new plan, to any extent whatever, gives the child no facility for learning new ones. Every word must be taken upon authority, until the alphabet is learned.

2d. — Since the alphabet must, at some period, be acquired, with all its imperfections, it is but a poor relief, to compel the child, at first, to associate seven hundred different, arbitrary forms with the ideas which they represent, and then to learn the alphabet itself.

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This impression is not correct. And it is somewhat surprising, that the defenders of the new system do not see, when speaking of the alphabet, as destitute of interest, that a striking analogy exists between the power of a letter and its visible symbol, on the one hand, and the meaning of a word and its symbol, on the other.

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4th. — The new system fails to accomplish the object which it proposes. The main design of this mode of teaching seems to be, to escape the ambiguity arising from the variety of sounds which attach to some of the letters, as well as from the variety of forms by which the same sounds may be represented.

The defenders of this system seem to forget, since these anomalies are elementary, that they must be carried into the formation of words. Thus, we can represent a single elementary sound, first by *ā*, then by *ai*, and again, by *ei;* hence, we can form three different words; as *vane*, *vain*, *vein*. In a similar manner we have, *rain*, *reign*, *rein; wright*, *write*, *right*, *rite;* and hundreds of others. It will be seen at once, that it must be as difficult for a child to attach the same sound to four different pictures called words, as to four different pictures called letters. Hence, it is plain, that we have "harlequins" among words; as well as among letters. The only difference is, that the former are more numerous, yet the legitimate offspring of the latter. We have "masqueraders," too, among words. Let the sound represented by the four letters, r-i-t-e, fall upon the child's ear, and he may think, either, of a ceremony, of making letters with a pen, of justice, or of a workman. Again, let either the printed or spoken word *pound*, for example, be given; and he may think of an enclosure for stray cattle, of striking a blow, of certain weights, as avoirdupois, apothecaries', or Troy weight, and also, of a denomination of money. To illustrate the difficulty arising from this equivocal word, or from any other one of the hundreds in the language, we will pursue a course similar to that in which Mr. Mann shows the child's perplexity with the letter *a*, on page 93 of the report. Pound has more than seven different meanings, if we take into the account all the various weights, and moneys. But we will suppose it to have only seven. Now, if the sentences in which this word occurs be equally divided among these seven meanings, we have only to use the words *sentence*, *word*, and *idea*, instead of *word*, *letter*, and *sound;* and the secretary's own language will bring us to a result as deplorable as that to which he arrives; namely, "that he [the child] goes wrong six times in going right once."

But what shall be done, since words, as well as letters, may become "masqueraders," and "harlequins?" Shall some enthusiastic reformer, some Miss Edgeworth, come forward and tell us that no thorough reform can be effected, till the practice of teaching words, before *whole sentences*, is abolished; intimating, that at no distant period children will begin with whole *paragraphs*, and, if very small, with whole *pages*?

Thus, it would seem that the advocates of this system, in attempting to shun Scylla are falling upon Charybdis. But it will, probably, be said in reply, that the connection will aid the child in determining the meaning of such words. This we willingly grant, and at the same time, claim, what is somewhat similar to it, in teaching the use of the letters; namely, that simple analogies may be pointed out to the child, which will aid him, not a little, in determining the correct sound to be given to the letters. In monosyllables ending with *e* mute, the vowel, almost without exception, is long, or like the name-sound. So when a syllable ends with a vowel, especially if accented, that vowel is long. The vowel *a*, in monosyllables, ending with *ll*, has, generally, the broad sound. A monosyllable, ending with a single consonant, contains, usually, a short vowel. These are only a few of the various analogies which may be pointed out, and which will enable the learner, in most cases, to give the correct sound.

5th.—It introduces confusion into the different grades of schools.

The elements must be taught somewhere. If neglected in the primary schools, they must be taught in the grammar schools. And thus the order of things is reversed, and disarrangement introduced into the whole school system. The teacher who is employed, and paid, for instructing in the higher branches, is compelled to devote time and attention to the studies appropriately belonging to the schools of a lower grade. This is found to be the case, to too great an extent, in the schools of our city. We do not say this to the disparagement of the primary school teachers, or from the belief, that there is a want of fidelity on their part. We believe it to be, in part, at least, owing to the system of teaching, or rather want of system, in the primary schools. The books used in these schools, according to the author's own account of them, are adapted to either system. This is equivalent to saying that they are adapted to neither; for it is impossible to see how two methods, so entirely different from each other, as those under consideration, can be embraced in one series of books. After repeated inquiries made in many of the primary schools of the city, we are persuaded, that the teachers have taken the full amount of license allowed them, by the author of the books which they use. Some begin with the alphabet; others require the children to learn eight or ten words, from which they teach the several letters, though not in the order in which they are arranged in the alphabet. Some carry the process of teaching words to a greater extent, yet require the child to learn to spell, before teaching him to read. Others, as will appear, teach the children to read, without making them at all acquainted with the letters. One evil, resulting from this want of system, is a great neglect of spelling. It is the opinion of those masters who have been longest in the service, and can therefore compare the results of the two systems, that in respect to spelling, among the candidates for admission from the primary schools, there has been a great deterioration during the trial of the new system; a period of about six years. The following instance, which occurred a few weeks since, though perhaps, an extreme case, well illustrates a large class of cases, in which there is a deplorable neglect of spelling. A girl in her tenth year, presented herself for admission into one of the grammar schools, with a certificate of qualification from the district committee. The master gave her to read, the sentence beginning with the words, "Now if Christ be preached," &c. The third word, she called "Jesus," and persisted in saying it was so pronounced. She was requested to spell it; the master, at the same time, pointing out the first letter. This letter, she called "Jesus." The first letter of the alphabet was pointed out; the pupil uttered "and"; the second letter was shown her; "but," was her response. The letter *m*, she called "man." She was sent to the assistant teachers of the school, who found her totally ignorant of the alphabet. The master sent her back to the primary school, with her certificate endorsed, "not qualified; can be admitted only by the authority of the sub-committee of the grammar school."

And, here we may remark, that the testimony of able primary school teachers themselves, who have tried both systems, is adverse to this mode of teaching reading. They declare that in the end, nothing is gained, but much is lost; that the task of teaching the alphabet, and the art of combining letters into words, are more difficult, and less satisfactory, than if the child had begun with the letters.

6th. — It cherishes and perpetuates a defective enunciation.

Children so universally come to the school-room, especially from uneducated families, with habits of incorrect articulation, that the efforts of the teacher, at an early period, should be directed towards the correction of these habits. The only sure way to accomplish this, is to drill the pupils on the elements of sound. The errors in enunciation consist, chiefly, in giving either an incorrect sound to, in suppressing, or in mingling, the vocal elements. A forcible enunciation of these elements, separately, will direct the attention of the child to, and correct, those which are uttered improperly; will bring out those which have been omitted, or too feebly expressed, and will tend to keep separate those, which, from early habit, have been blended together. Nor is this all. Reading may be divided into two departments, which may be called the *mechanical* and the *intellectual.* The latter embraces all the higher excellences of reading; such as *emphasis*, *inflection*, *pauses*, and what is comprehended in the term *expression.* To prepare the pupil for this department of reading, it is of paramount importance, that all which is embraced in the former, should first be carefully taught. In this discussion, we are concerned especially with the mechanical part of reading. It includes two particulars; first, a skilful use of the *tools* employed in the art, that is, the ability of uttering with fluency the *sounds* of the words, while the eye passes rapidly over the letters which represent them; and, secondly, such a thorough training of the organs of speech, as will enable the pupil to give those sounds with clearness and force. By the new system, neither of these particulars can, to any great extent, be attended to; for they both involve a knowledge of the elements. To be able to utter the elements forcibly, when taken either separately, or combined, is not unlike the acquirement of skill on an instrument of music. That a performer can pass over rapid and difficult passages with ease and gracefulness, is the surest proof that he has been thoroughly drilled, on every *note* of those passages. He did not acquire them all in a mass, as a *whole;* and that by some fortunate movement of the fingers which cost him no effort. Such skill must have been the result of patient toil, which was but gradually rewarded with success. What if one desiring to become a skilful player upon the piano-forte, yet impatient to play a tune, because more *agreeable*, should, at first, omit the lessons for practice, and place the fingers upon the keys, regardless of order, or the rules contained in the "Book of Instructions?" The bad habits, thus acquired, might last him through life, and ever prove an obstacle to his success. But what would be thought of a professor of music, who should allow of such a disorderly beginning? *Still more*, of one who should recommend it, and affirm that no thorough reform could be effected without it? A defect in the enunciation of the elements, is a radical one, and the new system is directly calculated to perpetuate it. If there was no other argument against the system, this, of itself, would be sufficient to show its utter futility.

The *third* and last argument for the system, in the words of the secretary, is, that "the rapidity of acquisition will be greater, if words are taught before letters." This is a question of fact. It either is so, or it is not so; and facts alone, can sustain the position which Mr. Mann here assumes. If he could have adduced facts to sustain the assertion, and then have said, *I know*, instead of saying, as he does on the 92d page of the report, "I believe that if two children, of equal quickness and capacity, are taken, one of whom can name every letter of the alphabet, at sight, and the other does not know them from Chinese characters, the latter can be most easily taught to read," such facts would have done much towards effecting the desired change in the State. But where are the facts? We have seen none. It is true, the secretary does allude, in his second annual report, to the introduction of the system into the Boston primary schools, and says, "it is found to succeed better than the old mode." Here, let the reader first inquire, What is the system in the Boston schools? Is it precisely the one which Mr. Mann recommends? And in the second place, What is the opinion of practical teachers concerning the results of the nearest approaches to this system, as seen in the Boston schools for the last five or six years? And thirdly, let the reader be informed that "*The Mother's Primer*," which begins with words, was introduced, as appears from the vote of the Boston Primary School Committee, Nov. 7, 1837, and that the second annual report of the Secretary of the Board of Education, bears date Dec. 26, 1838, leaving an interval of about one year only, for the trial of the new system. Whether a trial during so short a period, amidst the novelty always attending a change, is sufficient to warrant the assertion that "it is found to succeed better than the old mode," we will submit to the judgment of any candid mind.

It is supposed, that the secretary, when he affirms that "the rapidity of acquisition will be greater, if words are taught before letters," intends to include the acquisition of the alphabet, with the modes of combining letters into words; otherwise the whole matter is unworthy of the attention of the friends of education. Such being the case, the question stands thus. Two children, in like circumstances, in every respect, commence learning to read; the first learns some seven hundred different words, as he would so many different letters; having acquired no more ability to learn the seven hundred and first, than he had at the beginning; afterwards he learns the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, including all the "harlequins" and "masqueraders," and finally the art of combining the letters into words. The other learns first, the letters; then, the art of combining them; and finally makes use of this knowledge, to acquire his seven hundred words. Now by what rule of arithmetic, or of common sense, it is ascertained that the former will advance more rapidly than the latter, is to us entirely unknown.

Such are the reasons that have compelled us to dissent from the opinions of the secretary, on this branch of education. The main question at issue, we are constrained to answer in the negative; because such a change, as that proposed by Mr. Mann and others, is neither called for, nor sustained by sound reasoning. The arguments adduced in its support are, as we believe, inconclusive. The plausibility of some, arises from considerations wholly irrelevant; others are fallacious; and others still, are based upon false premises.

On the contrary, the reasons brought against the change, and in favor of the prevailing system, are of paramount importance. Therefore, as conscientious and faithful servants in the cause of education, we feel bound to adhere to the path of duty, rather than yield to the opinions even of those who are high in authority.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE.

In remarking upon those parts of Mr. Mann's report, which relate to school discipline, we shall attempt to show, that having, in the commencement of his career, in behalf of common schools, set out with the notion, that appeals to the baser motives, can gradually be refined out of use, he has steadily kept that idea before his mind ; always granting the right, and the rare necessity of using corporal punishment, " in the present state of society," and with the present corps of teachers, but confidently expecting and ever predicting, as being near at hand, the day of its total disuse; that by such a course, he has been able to keep alive in the public mind, to some extent, the belief that it may gradually disappear, as the science of teaching advances; and that at length, in his last report especially, he seems, upon cursory examination, to present the practical fruits and realization of this long-cherished notion, by exhibiting the results of experience in certain schools which he has visited abroad.

Two classes of these schools, we think, cannot properly be compared with our common schools. The first, embracing those which we shall denominate *sanative* schools, because they are designed for the benefit of those individuals who are, in some way, disabled or diseased, either physically, mentally, or morally ; the second, embracing foreign schools, especially the Prussian, in which the school authority and officers are wholly governmental, and independent of the people ; while in this country, they are, and, by the spirit of our institutions, must be, almost as directly, in the hands of the people. We shall admit that, in the first class of schools, kindness is the appropriate, and should be the almost exclusive means of influence. And we shall admit, in regard to the second class, that awe for the strong arm of a government beyond the control of the people, may enable judicious and accomplished teachers to avoid, in a great measure, the necessity of an actual appeal to force.

A third class of schools to which reference has sometimes been made, though not in the report now under examination, is the model schools connected with the Normal schools. We shall argue that their results are unsatisfactory, being the results of moral experiments, made under limited and controlled, not to say, selected circumstances; and shall venture to advance the opinion, without meaning to imply any bad faith, or want of sound sense in the experimenters, that they are, from the nature of the case, in great danger of mistaking particular cases for general rules, and supposing a theory established, when it has been but partially tested; so prone are we, in moral subjects, to suffer our wishes to guide our belief.

After having disposed of those cases which are set forth as most forcibly illustrating the strength of unaided love, or, as Mr. Mann expresses it, "the all but omnipotent power of generosity and affection," in supporting law and order, we shall attempt to show that all school order, like that of the family and of society, must be established upon the basis of acknowledged authority, as a starting-point; and shall endeavor to maintain, not only the right, but the duty to enforce it, by an appeal to the most appropriate motives, that a true heart and sound mind may select, among all those which God has implanted in our nature; preferring always, the higher to the lower; but rejecting none, which circumstances may render fitting; not even the fear of physical pain; for we believe that that, low as it is, will have its place, its proper sphere of influence, not for a limited period merely, till teachers become better qualified, and society more morally refined, but while men and children continue to be human; that is, so long as schools and schoolmasters and government and laws are needed.

Our first position, then, we think, will readily be admitted by all, who have examined the subject carefully; namely, that, notwithstanding Mr. Mann's opinion in support of the doctrine of corporal punishment, his avowal of which we claim, his seventh annual report, no less than the general tenor of his Common School Journal, is calculated, on the whole, to beget in the mind of the reader, a total distrust in its efficacy, under any, and all circumstances. He brings out into the strongest light, all cases of its extravagant abuse, and, for contrast, gives the most prominent relief to those successful results which have been obtained entirely without it; thus instituting *forced* comparisons, which strike the mind more by their effect of contrast, than by their just and apposite analogies.

True, when he assumes the unwonted style of grave argument, he does indeed admit the necessity of a very rare resort to it in extreme cases; but even this bare admission, he makes with an ill-concealed reluctance, and seems to regard such necessity, not as inherent in the nature of things, but only as a temporary evil; he speaks of corporal punishment, as "a relic of barbarism," fast disappearing, and tolerated any longer upon the list of means, rather because teachers are incompetent, than because pupils are incorrigible. Thus the whole force of his rhetoric is aimed to bring, not merely the abuse of the rod, but its legitimate use, into disrepute; to give false impressions of its real value, as a means of discipline; and, without unequivocally assuming to exclude it, to cast reproach and odium upon all those who openly resort to it, or profess any faith in its good effects.

We shall here present, as the ground of what we have advanced in regard to Mr. Mann's position, some extracts from the Common School Journal, embodying his own opinions, and, as introductory to, or explanatory of these, we shall of necessity present a few, embodying the opinions of others.

A writer over the signature P. C., addressing himself "to females purposing to become teachers," holds the following language.

> "Teachers have greatly degraded their office, by consenting to turn flagellators for the parish. It is a degrading, hateful office. As you would respect the character of teacher, have nothing to do with it;" — "dismiss the refractory boy;" — "there is great objection to turning boys into the street;" — "but there is greater, in my opinion, either to retaining them in school to the injury of others, or to keeping them in subjection by the terror of the rod. The rod poisons the very atmosphere of the schoolroom, and creates more moral evil than can accrue from turning out a single pupil."—*Common School Journal*, Vol. III. p. 153.

The editor, after saying that, were the use of corporal punishment abolished, "greater curses would come in to supply its place, and that instead of the one devil of the rod, which is cast out, we should have the seven devils of anarchy, hastening in to take its place," remarks,

> "Nor are we able to discover any principle or precept, that would prohibit the use of punishment, in school, which, if carried out to its legitimate consequences, would not also prohibit it, in society. Indeed, this is the abyss of folly into which the thorough and consistent non-resistants blindly plunge."—*Ibid.* p. 154.

Here is a distinct avowal of the doctrine of physical punishment, accompanied by an unanswerable argument in favor of it; an argument founded upon the palpable absurdity to which its denial would lead. This is all very well; the doctrine is admitted and defended. But, as introductory to the above, he says,

> "We are willing to concede to our friend, that the use of the rod, in school, is twice cursed, — cursing him that gives, and him that takes, — nay three times cursed, if he pleases, for it often leads the inflictor and sufferer to curse each other."—*Ibid.*

Thus, in the preface to his argument, the practical application of the very doctrine he defends, is crippled with more than double cursing.

Take another illustration of the same idea. The Committee on Education, in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, appointed to consider the expediency of a law by which school teachers shall have power to dismiss scholars from our town schools, for bad behavior, in their report say,

> "Though your committee think that this power is already possessed, they think at the same time, that it ought to be sparingly used; for those who are excluded from the privileges of a school under its operation, are almost always such as most need them. A wholesome discipline ought to be maintained; and such measures ought to be carried into effect, if possible, as would extend the benefits of a school to all within its territorial limits. Legislation cannot provide against all the evils that may chance to disturb a public school, any more that it can reach all the troubles of an ill-governed family."—*Ibid*, Vol. III. pp. 65, 66.

The editor, after cordially concurring in the opinion of the committee, remarks,

> "The candidates for expulsion will generally be turbulent, refractory scholars; and these are the very ones who most need a subjugation to authority. If they defy the control of the teacher and committee, when young, will they not bid defiance to society, and the laws of the land, when old? Suppose only one school in ten, among all the schools in the State, should expel a scholar for mutinous conduct, or general bad behavior; this would form a body of more than three hundred expelled scholars; or rather an army of more than three hundred picked men, to carry on a *guerilla* warfare against all the interests of society."
>
> "The family, in the first instance, is the place where the bad passions of children are to be brought into subjection. If not done there, it becomes so much the more important that it should be done in the school." — "We abhor corporal punishment, but we abhor the halter and the State prison more; and, in the present state of society, it is our belief, that if the first be not sometimes used, the last must be."—*Ibid*, Vol. III. pp. 66, 67.

Here again, is an excellent and conclusive argument; and had the matter been left thus, it would have been well settled. But, in immediate connection, as if alarmed lest the force of his own reasoning might prove fatal to his long-cherished faith in the sufficiency of unaided love, he introduces the usual accompanying safeguard and corrective to his argument. With the decision of the Committee, in which he has just concurred, and with his own admission even, "that if corporal punishment be not sometimes used, the halter and the State prison must be," fresh in his mind, he yet adds,

> "The great desideratum is, to find teachers who can manage and govern a school, without resorting to physical force; if this is not done, or cannot be done, then the next step is to prepare such teachers, as fast as time will allow. But in the interim, the schools must be continued." . . . . . . "We hold, therefore, that although corporal punishment is a great evil, — and almost a shame to all parties concerned in it, — yet that it is not the greatest of evils."—*Ibid*, p. 67.

Shame properly attaches to the guilty offender, not to the inflicter of punishment, whose only legitimate object is, to deter from guilty offending in future. We cannot refrain from saying, in this connection, though it be thought "*almost*," or even quite "a shame" for teachers to strive, by a wholesome application of the rod in youth, to save their pupils from the dungeon and the halter in maturer life, may the day be distant, when New England teachers, forgetting the stern virtue, and inflexible justice, and scorn-despising firmness of the Puritan founders of our free schools, shall be ashamed to incur such a false-called shame as this. May their firmness of principle be commensurate, at least, with their sensitiveness to reproach; so that, however much they may suffer in their feelings, from the contemptuous sarcasm of those who denounce them as brutes and barbarians, they may yet stifle feeling, and, listening rather to the dictates of conscience and duty, be guided more by the fixed principles of a true scriptural philosophy, than by the changeful notions of fluctuating experimentalism.

But, to return to our subject. There stands the doctrine, again well argued and maintained, unmoved and unmovable; and there too, stands the practice, disgraced and degraded, signalizing its followers, in the Hon. Secretary's opinion, as the rear guard of retreating barbarism, and sinking them to the level of brutes. Who, that thinks closely, needs be told the tendency of all this? And yet, to the cursory reader, it is not so apparent. It is gravely hinted, at least, that though, for the present, such violent measures must be tolerated, for the want of teachers sufficiently skilful and refined to do without them, yet the time is at hand, when the search for those who can discipline their pupils entirely without the rod, will not be in vain. "In the interim, the schools must be continued." That is, the present incumbents, whose minds are dark, must be allowed to compromit their dignity and honor, and bring shame upon themselves, by what their vilifiers are pleased to call a needless appeal to base and unworthy motives; but their reign of terror is to last, only till their more worthy successors shall be ripe and ready for their places.

The preceding extracts are from the Common School Journal, and exhibit the Hon. Secretary in the twofold relation of a defender of the doctrine of physical coercion, and an opposer of its practical application. Hereafter, we shall quote from his seventh annual report, where we may look in vain, for any sympathy or support for either.

> "I have seen countries, in whose schools all forms of corporal punishment were used without stint or measure; and I have visited one nation, in whose excellent and well-ordered schools, scarcely a blow has been struck for more than a quarter of a century. On reflection, it seems to me that it would be most strange if, from all this variety" — "of the discipline of violence and of moral means, many beneficial hints for our warning or our imitation, could not be derived." — *Seventh Annual Report*, p. 20.

> "On reviewing a period of six weeks, spent in visiting schools in the north and middle of Prussia and Saxony, I call to mind three things, about which I cannot be mistaken."

Of these, the third, which is the only one pertinent to our present purpose, is thus stated;

> "Though I saw hundreds of schools, and thousands, — I think I may say, within bounds, tens of thousands of pupils, — *I never saw one child undergoing punishment, or arraigned for misconduct. I never saw one child in tears from having been punished, or from fear of being punished.*"—*Ibid*, pp. 132, 133.

We readily concede that, for reasons which will hereafter be considered, the occasions for using blows, or even harsh words, in the schools here referred to, may be rare. But our judgment, in regard to the degree of severity resorted to, in these schools, compared with that exercised in our own, might be better founded, if the Hon. Secretary had informed us, in how many instances he has witnessed *blows*, and *angry words*, and *tears*, "during the time he has spent in visiting schools" in *this country*. But the disuse, or even the infrequency of the punishment, cannot safely be inferred from the fact, that no evidence of its occurrence was presented to a distinguished visitor. It is the opinion of the best judges, that punishments should generally be administered in private. Teachers therefore do not make an exhibition of them. To do so, would be unpleasant to themselves, unkind to their pupils, and discourteous to their visitors. Should the Prussian Minister of Public Instruction see fit to honor the schools of this country, with a visit, we presume he would not be shocked with a single exhibition of cruelty or anger. The teachers, we doubt not, would find other means of entertaining him. And even if some thoughtless pupil should need a word of caution, it might effectually be given, without appearing to a stranger, and especially to a *foreigner*, as an *angry* word. The mildest terms may portend dire consequences to the disobedient.

Again, speaking of the Prussian teacher, the secretary remarks,

> "The zeal of the teacher enkindles the scholars. He charges them with his own electricity to the point of explosion. Such a teacher has no idle, mischievous, whispering children around him, nor any occasion for the rod. He does not make desolation of all the active and playful impulses of childhood, and call it peace; nor, to secure stillness among his scholars, does he find it necessary to ride them with the nightmare of fear." — *Ibid*, p. 135.

> "The third circumstance I mentioned above, was the beautiful relation of harmony and affection, which subsisted between teacher and pupils. I cannot say that the extraordinary fact I have mentioned, was not the result of chance or accident. Of the probability

of that, others must judge. I can only say that, during all the time mentioned, I never saw a blow struck, I never heard a sharp rebuke given, I never saw a child in tears, nor arraigned at the teacher's bar for any alleged misconduct. On the contrary, the relation seemed to be one of duty first, and then affection, on the part of the teacher, — of affection first, and then duty, on the part of the scholar."—*Ibid*, p. 137.

We like the structure and antithesis of that last sentence very well; but shall have occasion hereafter, to object to the final clause, as containing an unsound theory. But further,

"I heard no child ridiculed, sneered at, or scolded, for making a mistake."—*Ibid.*

"No child was disconcerted, disabled, or bereft of his senses, through fear."—*Ibid.*

"What person worthy of being called by the name, or of sustaining the sacred relation of a parent, would not give anything, bear anything, sacrifice anything, to have his children, during eight or ten years of the period of their childhood, surrounded by circumstances, and breathed upon by sweet and humanizing influences, like these!

"I mean no disparagement of our own teachers, by the remark I am about to make. As a general fact, these teachers are as good as public opinion has demanded; as good as the public sentiment has been disposed to appreciate; as good as public liberality has been ready to reward; as good as the preliminary measures taken to qualify them would authorize us to expect. But it was impossible to put down the questionings of my own mind, — whether a visiter could spend six weeks in our own schools, without ever hearing an angry word spoken, or seeing a blow struck, or witnessing the flow of tears."—*Ibid*, p. 138.

How grateful should our brethren of the rod and ferule be, for the generous admission, that they have done as well as they knew how, and as well even as a benighted public opinion would warrant; and, as they retire into merited banishment to give place to persons possessing those higher qualifications, which an enlightened public sentiment and an enlarged public liberality are to bring into requisition, it will be some reward for their unblessed efforts, to call to mind the gentle admonitions, the courteous advice, the kind instructions, the encouraging aid, the respectful language, they have recieved, from those who have led on the reform, and swept away their dynasty of misrule. Can we ever forget the soft reprovings, by which these reformers have so often tried to win us from the error of our ways? But enough of irony, if we may be pardoned for indulging in it even once.

A few more extracts, to give the subject a full hearing.

> "In Holland, corporal punishment is obsolete. Several teachers and school-officers told me, there was a law prohibiting it in all cases. Others thought it was only a universal practice founded on a universal public opinion. The absence of the Minister of Public Instruction, when I was at the Hague, prevented my obtaining exact information on this interesting point. But whatever was the cause, corporal punishment was not used. In cases of incorrigibleness, expulsion from school was the remedy.
>
> "One of the school magistrates of Amsterdam, told me, that, last year, about five thousand children were taught in the free schools of that city. Of this number, from forty to fifty were expelled for bad conduct. This would be about one per cent."—*Ibid*, p. 160.

> "The schools of Holland were remarkable for good order,—among the very best, certainly, which I have any where seen."—*Ibid*, p. 161.

We should think that an expulsion of one scholar in a hundred, might establish tolerable order amongst the remaining ninety-nine. This ratio of expulsion, would give, in the city of Boston, about seventy-five outcasts annually. A noble return it would be, for her munificent expenditure of over two hundred thousands of dollars in public instruction, to cast back upon her hands, unimproved, those very subjects, the neglect of whose proper training, must inevitably endanger the welfare of her citizens, and the safety of their property. The community have a right to expect that the pupils of the public schools shall be really taught and governed within them; and even the capital which is taxed for the support of these schools, may justly claim that they inculcate in all the young, and especially in those who are most exclusively dependent upon them for instruction, and who most need it, that respect for law, and order, and the rights of property, which, more than any thing else, gives permanent value to wealth. The *public* schools then, especially, are forbidden, by the true spirit not only of moral, but of civil and mercantile law, to turn back their worst materials, unwrought, upon society.

> "In England, as there is no National system, nor any authoritative or prevalent public opinion towards which individual practice naturally gravitates, a great diversity prevails on this head. In some schools, talent and accomplishment have wholly superseded corporal punishment; in others, it is the all-in-all of the teacher's power, whether for order or for study. I was standing one day, in conversation with an assistant teacher, in a school consisting of many hundred children, when, observing that he held in his hand a lash or cord of Indian rubber, knotted towards the end, I asked him its use. Instead of answering my question in words, he turned round to a little girl, — sitting near by, perfectly quiet, with her arms, which were bare, folded before her and lying upon her desk, — and struck such a blow upon one of them as raised a great red wale or stripe almost from elbow to wrist!"—*Ibid*, p. 163.

We are left in doubt as to the character of those schools in which "talent and accomplishment have wholly superseded corporal punishment;" whether they were large or small, high or low, public or private. At any rate, a wanton act of violence like that just described, in whatever school it occurred, could excite no feelings but those of unmingled indignation; and conclusively proved, that its author was totally unfit to be trusted with power; but it has the same want of pertinency as to the question of abolishing corporal punishment altogether, that any argument, drawn from the abuse of a thing, has, when adduced to show the necessity of its total disuse.

We next proceed to consider, in their bearings upon the general subject of school discipline, the results obtained, by mild treatment wholly, in certain schools which we have denominated *sanative*, because they are designed to heal and restore to society those who, either from the misfortune of an imperfect physical organization, as in the case of the blind, and the deaf and dumb, or from some peculiar moral or social debasement, privation, or disability, as in the case of the pupils of the "Redemption Institute," are excluded from the full enjoyment of its privileges.

> "The school of Mr. J. H. Wichern is called the 'Rauhe Haus,' and is situated four or five miles out of the city of Hamburg. It was opened for the reception of abandoned children of the very lowest class, — children brought up in the abodes of infamy, and taught, not only by example but by precept, the vices of sensuality, thieving and vagabondry."—*Ibid*, p. 73.

No philanthropist can read, without emotions of heartfelt gratitude, the account given of the influences of this institution. It is delightful to learn of the triumphs of unaided Christian love, when acting in its proper sphere, which is "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" but we err in expecting that the same agencies will produce similar results, under circumstances which are widely different.

Now, whatever may be said of the needlessness of compulsory, or retributive discipline, in institutions for the blind, the deaf and dumb, the insane, the imprisoned for past crime, and in charitable institutions for relieving the wants and bettering the condition of the poor, and, in short, in all institutions for elevating those who have become depressed below the common level, either by misfortune or voluntary vice, it can have but a very partial bearing upon the question of discipline, in our common schools.

The very condition of the unfortunate, is one of dependence and privation. The feelings they naturally excite in the mind, are those allied to compassion. And, on the other hand, a sense of their own dependence, and of their necessary indebtedness to those whose faculties and freedom are unimpaired, naturally awakens in their minds, habitual emotions of gratitude. Our relation to them, is essentially one of sympathy with suffering; and their relation to us, one of grateful dependence. Surely the occasions must be rare indeed, for inflicting chastisement upon those, whose whole life, compared with that of others, may be regarded as disciplinary; they are subdued by the very condition of their being.

It is to be regretted, that the Hon. Secretary could not pass from this subject, without giving another of his characteristic thrusts, however far-fetched, at the crabbed and old-fashioned disciples of Solomon. We merely quote the passage, and leave it without comment.

> "Who can reflect upon this history, where we see a self-sacrificing man, by the aids of wisdom and Christian love, exorcising, as it were, the evil spirits from more than a hundred of the worst children whom a corrupted state of society has engendered; — who can see this, without being reminded of some case, perhaps within his own personal knowledge, where a passionate, ignorant and perverse teacher," — "has been put in possession of an equal number of fine-spirited children, and has, even in a shorter space of time, put an evil spirit into the bosom of them all?"—*Ibid*, p. 81.

Though it may seem a digression, we shall here notice the manner, in which the Hon. Secretary has compared the German schools for deaf mutes, with common schools.

> "The success in teaching the deaf and dumb in Germany, and the means by which it is accomplished, furnish some invaluable hints in regard to the teaching of other children.
>
> "1. In teaching these children to speak, if difficult and complicated sounds are given before easy and simple ones, some of the vocal organs will be at fault, in regard either to position or motion; and if the error is continued but for a short period, false habits will be acquired, which it will be almost impossible for any subsequent skill or attention to eradicate. No uninstructed person, therefore, should tamper with this subject. No one should attempt to teach the deaf and dumb to speak who has not carefully read the best treatises upon the art, or witnessed the practice of a skilful master. The effect of false instruction in regard to the voice-producing muscles, furnishes a striking analogy to that false mental instruction given by incompetent parents and teachers, by which all the intellectual and moral fibres of a child's nature are coiled and knotted into a tangle of errors, from which they can never be wholly extricated even by a life of exertion." — *Ibid*, p. 34.

Surely, "no one," we admit, "should attempt to teach the deaf and dumb to speak, who has not carefully read the best treatises upon the art." The wonder is, that they can be taught to speak at all. Was there ever such an artificial process of training; such an extensive substitution of one sense for another? Besides being able to produce articulate sounds and modulated tones, without the faculty of hearing, as a guide, think of a deaf mute's reading the language of another, by watching with the eye the muscular movements of his lips, and, what is far more astonishing, even doing the same in the dark, by feeling those motions with his hand placed upon the speaker's lips! We know not that the history of education furnishes such an example of the triumph of art, over the defects of Nature. It equals, if it does not surpass the triumphs of modern surgery, in furnishing new noses, and artificial limbs, and false palates. The educator here seems to take Nature into his own hands, and, therefore, needs to be skilful, and to proceed in precisely the right way. Wonderful, however, as are these results, they are by no means new, nor have they been thought, by many of the most competent judges, to possess sufficient value to repay one for the laborious process, by which they must be attained.*

The deaf and dumb pupil, in learning to speak, must receive every item of guiding from his instructor. He cannot proceed a single step without him; nor can he judge of the success of his own efforts; having no test in his own consciousness, by which to try his accuracy; since he is devoid of the very sense of perceiving sound.

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* "About ten years ago, several of the institutions of the deaf and dumb in Germany, were visited by the celebrated Degerando, than whom, no man living is more capable of forming an intelligent opinion on this subject, in company with one of the instructors in the Paris institution. Among others, they visited the school at Gruund, which, perhaps, has no superior in Germany. They report they gave is as follows: 'Truth compels us to say, that the success of articulation is by no means general. Of the thirty-three pupils, of the school at Gruund, two or three speak with facility and surprising neatness. About the same number are unable to speak intelligibly, and the great body articulate painfully, and often with contortions, which it is distressing to witness.'† Dr. Milnor noticed the same fact in England. In the latter country, it would appear, that teaching the deaf and dumb to speak is going out of use. The more recent institutions prefer to direct their efforts towards making their pupils acquainted with the English language, the store-house of knowledge, rather than merely to teach them the power of articulation and reading on the lips." — *Mercantile Journal.*

"Among other subjects of inquiry, Mr. Weld has been instructed to make a very critical and thorough investigation, with regard to the extent, and degree of success, which attend the plan of teaching deaf-mutes to articulate, and in return, to understand those who speak to them. Every one, the

† Quatrieme circulairo de l'institut royal des Sourds-muets de Paris, p. 53.

If therefore, he is to produce definite sounds, significant of thought, it must be, by imitating certain muscular movements revealed to him through the medium of sight and feeling. But that these movements do produce these sounds, he neither knows, nor can know, of himself; for this, he must rely entirely upon the authority of his teacher. Now, the Hon.

least acquainted with the history of their instruction, knows that this has been attempted, for a long course of years past, in some parts of Europe, both by private teachers and at public institutions, and that greater or less degrees of success have been claimed to be reached, in its practical results, by those who have adopted it. It is equally well-known, also, that its introduction into the schools for deaf-mutes, as a part of the system of education, has been strenuously opposed by a great number of the most distinguished teachers, and that it is not pursued at some of the most prominent and successful European institutions.

It is proper, then, to inquire, whether the amount of its practicability and usefulness may not be exaggerated; whether those who adopt it are not naturally led to make the most of it; and whether from the force of that prejudice which often attends the ardor with which a favorite object is pursued, they may not overlook the great sacrifices in the other departments of the education of deaf-mutes, which the laborious and very tedious process of teaching a certain portion of them to articulate, and to understand those who speak to them, necessarily demands.

Hasty conclusions ought not to be formed on a subject which, to say the least, has been matter of long and grave discussion among scientific individuals, and practical instructors in Europe, and to examine which thoroughly, so as to become acquainted with it in all its bearings, requires much practical experience in the instruction of deaf-mutes; a full and fair comparison of the whole course of education, and its results, at those institutions where articulation is taught, and at those where it is not; and a vast deal more of careful scrutiny and patient investigation, than can possibly be employed in a few short visits at a few of such schools." — *Twenty-eighth Report of the Directors of the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, at Hartford.*

Secretary, it seems, would have us think, that there is a "striking analogy" between the effect of false instruction in this process of teaching, and that of false mental and moral instruction in forming the characters of the young generally. Yet it seems perfectly plain that, in one case, the teacher's efforts do every thing by a mechanical and artificial process, the pupil blindly following, knowing nothing of his own success, except from the testimony of his teacher; while in the other, that is, in imparting moral and mental culture, the teacher's influence may be modified by a thousand varying circumstances, both seen and unseen, external to the child, and inherent in him, over which the teacher can exercise but a very limited control. We can never say, in the moulding of character, these are our materials, and these are our circumstances, and such and such will be our results. Education, here, with all her boasted powers, must

"Learn to labor and to wait;"

leaving much, in faith, for the child to work out himself, with fear and trembling. We have dwelt so long on this point, because we think, that from such seeming resemblances, the Hon. Secretary is prone to draw unsound conclusions himself, and thus to mislead others. But we proceed to consider the second hint furnished by the success in teaching the deaf and dumb.

> "2. After a few of the first lessons, it is ordinarily found that the keenest relish for knowledge is awakened in the minds of the pupils. They evince the greatest desire for new lessons, and a pleasure that seems almost ludicrously disproportionate, in the acquisition of the most trivial things. This arises, in the first place, from that appetite for knowledge which nature gives to all her children; and, in the second place, from the teacher's arranging all subjects of instruction in a scientific order, and giving to his pupils, from the beginning, distinct and luminous ideas of all he teaches. Were instruction so arranged and administered, in regard to other children, we might, as a general rule, expect similar results."—*Ibid*, pp. 34, 35.

Very much, indeed, depends, for the interest and progress of pupils, upon a judicious course of study, and proper classification. But no skill in the arrangement and adaptation of instructions can insure to the teacher of a common school, especially in a large city, that constant, eager attention, and unabated thirst for knowledge, which seems to be here expected. His pupils hold full communion with the external world, independently of him. They have much knowledge to acquire and more amusement, from their own cursory observation, both by seeing and hearing; and this facility of intercourse, with whatever is about them, must endanger their fixedness of attention to him. On the other hand, the teacher of the blind, and of the deaf and dumb, is eyes to the one, and ears to the other; of course then, they will naturally be attentive to see and hear through him; and this they may the more easily do, since casual incidents cannot, from the nature of the case, arrest their attention. We must remember, in making comparisons, that circumstances alter cases.

But the third hint has more bearing upon our subject.

> "3. Perhaps no relation in life illustrates the necessity or the value of love and confidence between teacher and pupil, more strikingly than this. Conceive of a child placed before his teacher, watching every shade of muscular motion with his eye, catching the subtlest vibrations with his hand, and expending his whole soul in striving to conjecture what muscles are to be moved; and then suppose the feeling of shame or mortification, of fear or fright, to be superinduced, withdrawing all attention from eye and hand, choking the utterance and paralyzing all the faculties; and were the pupil to remain in this state till he became as old as Methuselah, he would never succeed in uttering even an elementary sound, — unless it might be that of the interjection O! Such, though to a less extent, is the obstruction which fear, or contemptuous manners in a teacher, opposes to the progress of all children."—*Ibid*, p. 35.

What a violent supposition! Why imagine that any teacher might wish to superinduce fear, or shame, or mortification, under such circumstances, and without any possible reason for it? Here seems to be a gratuitous attack upon the use of fear and contempt and shame, as motives, where no one, possessing a moderate share of judgment and humanity, would think of resorting to either. We complain of this disposition, to render necessary but irksome measures, more irksome and even odious, by thus dwelling upon and exaggerating their abuses.

We come now to consider briefly the Prussian schools. In contrasting the school discipline of Prussia, with that of our own country, we must keep in mind the difference in the political institutions of the two countries. In Prussia, the government is far removed from the control of the people; here, it is almost directly in their hands. In Prussia, the schools are entirely regulated by the national government; here, all school regulations, appointments, and emoluments, are decided by a body, created directly by the votes of the people. There, the distance and awe of Monarchy, naturally constrain old and young to habits of external courtesy; here, republican notions of freedom and equality discourage, too much, perhaps, those outward expressions of respect, which are due from the young to superior age and attainment. A single extract will show the dignity and strong power of Prussian school authority.

> "Over all these intermediate functionaries is the Minister of Public Instruction. This officer is a member of the king's council. He takes rank with the highest officers in the government; sits at the council board of the nation with the minister of state, of war, of finance, &c., and his honors and emoluments are equal to theirs."—*Ibid*, p. 146.

> "After a child has arrived at the legal age for attending school,—whether he be the child of noble or of peasant,—the only two *absolute* grounds of exemption from attendance, are sickness and death. The German language has a word for which we have no equivalent, either in language or in idea. The word is used in reference to children, and signifies *due to the school;*—that is, when the legal age for going to school arrives, the right of the school to the child's attendance attaches, just as with us, the right of a creditor to the payment of a note or bond attaches, on the day of its maturity. If a child, after having been once enrolled as a member of the school, absents himself from it; or if, after arriving at the legal age, he is not sent there by his parents, a notice in due form is sent to apprize them of the delinquency. If the child is not

then forth-coming, a summons follows. The parent is cited before the court; and if he has no excuse and refuses compliance, the child is taken from him and sent to school, the father to prison."—*Ibid*, pp. 146, 147.

"One school officer of whom I inquired, whether this enforced school attendance were acceptable and popular, replied, that the people did not know any other way, and that all the children were born with an innate idea of going to school."—*Ibid*, p. 148.

Here is the coercive power of school law, with a vengeance! What need of paltry rod and ferule to deter a child from infringing rules, the violation of which may lodge his father in a dungeon! The high sheriff in our own court rooms, needs not the terrors of the visible birch, to keep the boys in order. "They'll take you up," said a little boy to another, who was climbing upon a stately gate, to pluck a tempting flower; and the little trespasser dropped, and scampered home, with the fancied tramp of the police-man, sounding in his startled ears; and even the assurance of his father, scarcely persuaded him that he was safe. Yet perhaps the same lawless urchin, the next day, attempted to baffle his teacher's efforts to subdue him with the rod, by the astounding threat, "I'll tell my mother of you." So conscious are our children of the supremacy and potency of parental protection, and so little do they witness of the tyranny of law, that in scenes to which they are accustomed, they are not easily alarmed. Children are not awe-struck by the penalties of the school-room, as they are by those of the civil code. They are familiar with the teacher, and know the worst of him; and as they are not to be alarmed with images of a gigantic power beyond the precincts of the school-room, they, whose fears need to be addressed at all, may fortify themselves with the conviction, that there is no great danger after all. They soon learn that powder without balls cannot hurt them; and as there are no unseen and imagined terrors to awe them into submission, we have no alternative but to present to their senses, in tangible shape, the actual rod.

In commenting upon the results of model schools, as affecting the general question of school discipline, we shall admit, that these schools, in some respects, bear a nearer resemblance to our common schools, than do either the Prussian, or those that we have denominated sanative. They are composed of children having full possession of their faculties, and taken from the people at large, promiscuously; for we will not suppose them culled. They are American schools, and that is saying that they are filled with free-born pupils, who know not the cramping trammels of political disfranchisement and disability. They are maintained moreover, at the public expense; and yet they have not the same relation to the people, that our common schools have. They may be said to resemble slightly the Prussian schools, in being supported and controlled by a remote power. Though they may not be wholly paid for from the state treasury, they are yet regulated by state authority, and are therefore independent of the people in whose immediate neighborhood they may be located. They are not, like the common schools, accessible, by necessity, to all within certain territorial limits. They may therefore, say what you will, be more select in their character. They are schools of wide fame; state institutions, visited from far and near, by fostering and refining influences; *novel* schools, and therefore popular; pointed at as the patterns for imitation; *model* schools; their very name is a douceur to vanity. We think it will be conceded, on all hands, that these schools are much less subject to disturbing influences, than schools which are obliged to receive all the children of a certain district, and to which such encouraging sympathies as we have alluded to are seldom proffered. We should therefore be cautious in making their success, the measure of our expectations in common schools; and in supposing them proper places for testing theories of general school discipline. We cannot safely reason from the one, to the other.

Conclusions drawn from moral experiments must always be extremely unsafe; because numberless modifying circumstances, greatly affecting the results, may not be known, much less defined. In physics, experiment is a sure test. Nitrogen and oxygen, combined in the proper proportions, form atmospheric air; and oxygen and hydrogen, water; you can combine your simples, and be sure of your compound; all foreign substances may easily be excluded from it. But as you advance from mere inorganic matter to even vegetable life, you must count upon your results with less of certainty. Of two plants, apparently alike, and nurtured with equal care, one may flourish, the other wither and die; and for reasons which you cannot explain. As you rise into animal life, the difficulty increases. A young student in medicine having an English patient laboring under a fever, allowed him chicken-broth, and he got well. He made a memorandum in his case-book, "chicken-broth cures a fever." He soon after had a French patient, similarly sick; the same prescription was ordered, and he died. He then entered in his case-book, "though chicken-broth cures an Englishman in a fever, it kills a Frenchman." The young disciple of Galen did not take into view quite all of the circumstances in the case.

As you advance still higher, from animal, to a study of intellectual and moral existence, mere experiment, becomes more and more, an unsatisfactory guide. While therefore, in chemistry, and natural philosophy, we may safely infer a general principle or rule from a limited number of facts, and sometimes even from a single fact, yet in the science of mind and ethics, it becomes us to use great caution in reasoning from a part to the whole.

Such then being the vague nature of moral reasoning, it is the very region for self-deception; the region in which the soul is in danger of being led away from innate truth, by the bewildering sophistries of misapplied logic. A man's opinions are a part of himself; the outward manifestation of his own mind; and if he is sincere and earnest, he will love them as himself. Now self-love distorts the mental vision, so that objects seen through that medium, being divested of their true proportions, present a false aspect. For this reason, the law wisely presumes that no one can be a just judge in his own cause. It also, without implying any venality or bad faith in individuals, provides that near relationship to either party, shall disqualify a man to sit in judgment; and even that the having expressed an opinion necessarily affecting the decision of a case at issue, shall exclude a man from a jury. This precaution is dictated by a true view of the short-sighted selfishness of human nature. It is equally philosophical to suppose, that any theorist is in danger of taking partial and favoring views of the operations of his own theories.

It is of the last importance then, that Normal schools should be based upon sound principles of teaching and governing, and a true philosophy of the human mind. For as they may be engines of great good, and a means of valuable reform, when thus based, so they may, on the other hand, become the propagators and disseminators of false and subversive notions, when guided by the partial views of an unsound philosophy. He who teaches others, should be himself well taught. And especially should those who teach teachers, and, a fortiori, those who give law and expound doctrine to the teachers of teachers, have their minds deeply imbued with truth; and we know not whence this truth is to be obtained, but from a close introspection of our own internal modes of being, guided through faith, by the Divine teachings of inspiration. Collateral aid may indeed be derived from a close and searching study of the elements of character, as they are developed and manifested in the actions of others. We think we have shown, however, that the last is not alone sufficient to settle our conclusions.

We come now to consider the question, what is proper school discipline, and upon what is it based? The fundamental principles upon which it is established, are of more importance than the details of any method for applying those principles in practice. If our theory be sound, common sense, rendered skilful by practical experience, will suggest the means best adapted to suit particular cases, without a description of those cases, infinitely varied as they must be. But, on the other hand, if our theory be false, however many facts we may bring to its support, it must work mischief in the main. For the good which it seems to effect, in those instances that do not fairly test it, is out-balanced by the evil it occasions in those which do show its deficiencies. Besides, though good may come out of evil, we are commanded not to "do evil that good may come." We may indeed arrive at truth through error; still it is the truth, and not the error, which is the vital principle of good. The idea we wish to advance is, that we must not forsake the guidance of an internal light, and infer too much from apparent results.

A ship with no compass may keep her way secure, when near the shore, with beacon-lights and land-marks to guide her. But at sea, with trackless water around her, and darkness overhead, she is blind, without that inner light, to point her to the pole and designate her path. The deceitful whirl of external objects may make the north seem south, and east seem west; but a glance at the faithful needle banishes all doubt and confusion, and, with adjusted helm, she in an instant finds her track, and onward presses to her destined port. Nature is the compass to guide us through the mazy track of training childhood up to that condition of healthy thoughtfulness and steady self-control, which should be the destined aim of education. If we leave out from our philosophy, any of the constituent elements of human nature, we destroy the equilibrium, and well-balanced character cannot be formed. We must take human nature as it is. Mr. Mann, after describing what we consider the abuse of emulation in one of the *Pensions*, or Boarding Schools, of Paris, says,

> "It may be said that this has a good effect, because it searches out the latent talent of the country, and suffers no genius to be lost through neglect. But here, as every where else, the great question is, whether the principle is right, for no craft of man can circumvent the laws of nature, or make a bad motive supply the place or produce the results of a good one."—*Seventh Annual Report*, p. 166.

Surely nothing can circumvent divinely-ordained law. We can neither by assertion and argument add to, nor by denial and objection, remove from nature, a single element. Education can neither create nor destroy; but only develop and construct character out of what previously exists, and all the constituents of human nature may come in to help in the formation of any individual character. In truth, all real knowledge, and all real character, are from within. Education, and in that term we include all reciprocal influences whatever, education draws out from the individual, (as the primitive word educo, to draw out, implies,) whatever intrinsic results it produces. It is the occasion, and not the cause of thought. It furnishes aliment as something foreign, which the mind, by its own inherent energy, must digest and assimilate. Its office is to strengthen by exercise and culture, that which is too weak, and to weaken by disuse and opposition, that which is too active and strong; to subdue the lower to the higher principles, and to produce thus the most perfect and harmonious whole. We trust the pertinency of these remarks will appear, from the great importance which we have urged, of taking human nature as it really exists, rather than as our vain wisdom may, from partial and distorted views, wish to make it. If we move all mind to action by an appeal to one motive mainly, we distort character greatly; if we appeal to a few leading motives, we distort it, though less; if we adopt the principle of overlooking a single one even, we may, and, in many instances, unquestionably shall come short of the best results. Every thing is to be used as not abusing it. Nothing is to be despised. Emulation, alone or principally, for all minds, is very objectionable; so is fear; so is sympathy; so is the pride of intellect; or the pride of virtue. So are any or all of them combined, to the exclusion of some other principle which as really exists as any of these; for that one, whatever it may be, has its uses, and may in certain individuals be the very one which needs strengthening.

The following passage from an able writer,* fully expresses our views on this subject. "The conclusion then to which we come is — that it is not a question whether emulation is to be admitted into schools, for it will exist there whether we will or no. *Non scripta; sed nata lex; quam non didicimus, accepimus, legimus, verum ex natura ipsa arripuimus, hausimus, expressimus; ad quam non docti; sed facti; non instituti; sed imbuti sumus;* — that since nature has admitted its existence we are to allow it; but always to apply it where most needed and to endeavor to combine it with higher principles. Finally, to direct it only to worthy objects, and teach it to submit to the regulations of a sagacious justice. In a public school, every boy has a share of reputation, which can be measured out to him with almost mathematic certainty; let him take it and therewith be content. Within these bounds emulation may fire the genius, (*Æmulatio alit ingenia*) without inflaming the passions or corrupting the heart."

But upon what shall school discipline be based? We answer unhesitatingly, upon *authority* as a starting-point. As the fear of the Lord is the beginning of divine wisdom, so is the fear of the law, the beginning of political wisdom. He who would command even, must first learn to obey. We object then, as we have said we should, to the idea, that the relation of a pupil to his teacher is one "of affection first, and then duty." We would rather reverse the terms; and though this is Mr. Mann's language, we will quote his own authority for reversing it, where he says of the German schools,

> "Until the teacher had time to establish the relation of affection between himself and the new-comer into his school, until he had time to create that attachment which children always feel towards any one who, day after day, supplies them with novel and pleasing ideas, it was occasionally necessary to restrain and punish them." — *Seventh Annual Report*, pp. 140, 141.

Another opinion of Mr. Mann's we are happy to quote and respond to.

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* Rev. Leonard Withington. Lecture on Emulation in Schools, before the American Institute of Instruction, in 1833.

"That there must be governors or rulers where there are communities of men, is so self-evident a truth, that it is denied only by the insane."—*Ibid*, p. 186.

And that implicit obedience to rightful authority must be inculcated and enforced upon children, as the very germ of all good order in future society, no one, who thinks soundly and follows out principles to their necessary results, will presume to deny. Yet, it is quite offensive now-a-days to ears polite, to talk of authority, and command, and injunction. We must persuade, and invite, and win. Respect for law is hardly sufficient to insure the infliction of its severer penalties. Thus the restraining influence of fear is ineffectual where most needed. Penalties, being too much dreaded by the innocent, are, for that very reason, too little dreaded by the guilty; who soon learn to avail themselves of the protecting shield that overstrained mercy casts before them.

The present is an age remarkable for the ascendency of sympathy over the sterner virtues. Kindness, powerful, overwhelming in its proper sphere, has assumed a false position; has stepped beyond the limits of its legitimate control, and, having wrought such mighty magic with human misery and guilt through the benevolent labors of Howard, Fry, Dix, and a host of others less widely known but equally deserving, seems almost ready to be crowned the omnipotent regenerator of the race, to purge the heart from sin and sanctify it unto holiness. But, in our admiration of the efficacy of one agent, we must not despise or overlook the value of others. Kindness cannot supply the place of authority, nor gratitude that of submission. We admit that the easiest, and where the doctrine of subordination is not questioned, the best way to gain a compliance with our wishes is, to allure to it by kind treatment and agreeable manners; but we deny that such compliance is any test of the spirit of obedience. True obedience is a hearty response to acknowledged authority. It does not voluntarily comply with a request, but implicitly yields to a command. When the mandate has gone forth, obedience does not obtain, till the will of the subject is merged completely in the will of the ruler. Sympathy may render obedience a pleasant act, and indeed may alone produce a prompt compliance, when simple authority would be powerless. Care should be taken not to confound generosity with justice, voluntary consent with unconditional surrender. External actions which are alike, often spring from motives which are widely different, and even opposite. Obedience recognises the existence of abstract authority; and all authority originates in the highest source. St. Paul writes to the Romans, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God."

It is here plainly shown to be the bounden duty of all, to recognise and obey rightful authority wherever it exists in the great chain, from the highest to the lowest; and distinctly as authority; not waiting for the dictates of inclination or feeling; not demanding to know the reason of the command, as a necessary condition of obedience; but simply asking if it be really the voice of rightful authority that speaks. On the other hand, this duty on the part of the subject, clearly implies an equal obligation on every one in whom authority is vested, firmly to maintain it, to insist upon obedience, and to accept no substitute, unless he feels an honest necessity for doing so. The ruler is to demand submission, not to himself, from a feeling of personal superiority, but to the station he fills, from a respect in his own mind for the abstract relation of order and authority. His own right he may waive, "not rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing." But the authority vested in the relation he sustains, he may not thoughtlessly yield up; it is not at his disposal. He governs not for his own sake, but to teach obedience to others. The governed, on his part, is not, from sympathy, and affection, and harmony of opinion, to obey the individual, but the authority residing in him rather, from a sense of obligation. These distinctions are especially important, in dealing with children;

because they are apt to be led by caprice. Moreover, since dependence is the distinguishing feature of childhood, the kindred doctrine of unconditional subordination is more easily taught, the earlier it is attempted. Probably few persons, who have not noticed children expressly for the purpose, have discovered what a modifying influence it has upon a child of strong will, to establish in his mind the necessity of yielding to the will of another. It is common to sneer at this idea of subjugation, and to call it "*breaking* the will," and destroying the free spirit; and we often hear the proud boast, "you may coax, but you cannot drive me." This means, I am weak enough to be wheedled by your arts, but have not the strength of purpose to subject my will to your authority; in other words, I acknowledge that my principle is the victim of my feeling; that it is safer to appeal to my caprice, than to my good sense. We cannot do better than to quote here from an eloquent writer* of the highest authority.

"The first step which a teacher must take, I do not mean *in* his course of moral education, but before he is prepared to enter that course, is to obtain the entire, unqualified submission of his school to his *authority*. We often err when designing to exert a moral influence, by substituting throughout our whole system persuasion for power; but we soon find that the gentle winning influence of moral suasion, however beautiful in theory, will often fall powerless upon the heart, and we then must have authority, to fall back upon, or all is lost. I have known parents, whose principle it was, not to require any thing of the child, excepting what the child could understand and feel to be right. The mother in such a case, forgets that a heart in temptation is proof against all argument; and I have literally known a case where the simple question of going to bed, required a parental pleading of an hour, in which the mother's stores of rhetoric and logic were exhausted in vain. Teachers sometimes too, resolve that they will resort to no arbitrary measures. They will explain the nature of duty, and the happiness of its performance, and lead their pupils to love what is right without bringing in the authority of arbitrary command. But the plan fails. However men may differ in their theories of human nature, it is pretty generally agreed by those who have tried the experiment, that neither school nor family can be preserved in order by eloquence and argument alone. There must be authority. The pupils may not often feel it. But they *must know that it is always at hand*, and the pupils must be taught to submit to it as to simple *authority*. The subjection of the governed to the will of one man, in such a way that the expression of his will must be the final decision of every question, is the only government that will answer in school or in family. A government not of persuasion, not of reasons assigned, not of the will of the majority, but of the will of the one who presides."

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* **Rev. Jacob Abbott. Lecture on Moral Education, before the American Institute, in 1831.**

Authority, then, is clearly the starting-point in all government; the corner-stone of all order. Remove it, and the reign of anarchy and chaos instantly succeeds.

> "Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
> Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
> Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
> Being on being wreck'd, and world on world,
> Heaven's whole foundations to their centre nod,
> And nature trembles to the throne of God."

Let us beware, then, how we worship more advanced and refined elements, to the exclusion of those, which, though lower and of earlier development, are equally general and primarily more important, inasmuch as they are the first to be recognised. The doctrine of allegiance and subjection to that which is above us, is the central essence of all real order. We may unconsciously deny it, and practically oppose its claims, and it is the dictate of human pride and weakness to do so; but before we can really and understandingly, and in full view of all our relations and destinies, renounce the doctrine of unconditional submission to that which we feel to be rightful authority, we must declare an individual independence, and take for our motto,

> "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven."

It being conceded, however, that authority must not be denied, a beautiful plan is contrived for escaping its exercise, by adroitly evading all occasions for its use. Always tell children to do what they like to do, and you will not need authority. In this way, at least, it may become obsolete. The secretary remarks,

> "Take a group of little children to a toy-shop, and witness their out-bursting eagerness and delight. They need no stimulus of badges or prizes to arrest or sustain their attention; they need no quickening of their faculties by rod or ferule. To the exclusion of food and sleep, they will push their inquiries, until shape, color, quality, use, substance both external and internal, of the objects, are exhausted; and each child will want the show-man wholly to himself."—*Seventh Annual Report*, p. 136.

This may be quite pretty while the novelty lasts. But how can each child have the show-man wholly to himself? Indeed, it would not be strange, considering the peculiarities of children, even those of a large growth, if each one should want the prettiest *toy* to himself. We should pity the hapless wight, whose office it might be to decide the momentous question of preference between them, especially if they had never learned any thing but how to be amused. However true it may be, that a thing ceases to amuse when it ceases to instruct, the reverse surely is not true, that there can be no instruction without amusement. Education should indeed aim to give us the art of making an amusement of our business; but it should warn us against the fatal error of attempting to make a business of our amusements. Since its influences are artificial and reforming, it does not merely follow impulses and inclinations, but chiefly resists, and corrects, and trains. Though neccessarily relying upon nature, it is not to be wholly passive, but to strengthen, and modify, and improve nature. Its legitimate sphere is, to help nature follow out the processes of art, to profit by past experience, and to train the mind to investigate principles and resolve things into their constituent elements. The school is to fit us for the world; and life is more a season of discipline than of amusement. Discipline is the rule; pleasure the exception. The present president of Geneva College* once observed,

" Let it be remembered, that the most attractive is not always the most useful study. ' Nil sine magno vita labore dedit mortalibus.' It is in study, as in trade,—we get nothing for nothing. We must make sacrifices and efforts for valuable attainments. Use—laborious use, must give vigor to our intellects, if we would make ' men understanding.' ' What young men require,' says an eloquent living philosopher,† ' are books learned and profound, and even somewhat difficult; that they may be accustomed to encounter difficulties, and that thus they may serve their apprenticeship to labor and to life; but it is really a pity to distribute to them, in the most reduced and slightest form, a few ideas without any real substance, communicated in such a manner, that a boy of fifteen years of age may learn the little book by heart in a day, may be able to recite it from beginning to end, and thus be induced to believe that he is not ignorant of humanity and of the world. No, men of energetic minds are formed by energetic studies.' But if pupils are put upon the study of somewhat difficult books, another question arises of special importance to the teacher, how he may awaken their interest and excite them to the requisite exertion;—and this question appears to me more important than any one, which belongs to the mere technical part of instruction. An excited mind disdains difficulties, and in overcoming them acquires new power and confidence; and the teacher accomplishes more for the benefit of his pupil, if he excites him to surmount an obstacle by his own efforts, than if he makes him an inclined plane and a rail-road, and lands him so gently on the other side, that he knows not where it was."

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* Benjamin Hale, D. D. Lecture on Natural Philosophy, before the American Institute of Instruction, in 1833.

† Cousin. Linberg's translation, p. 357.

It may strike some as singular, and yet it is perfectly philosophical, that while truth, though containing many seeming paradoxes, has no real ones, error, on the contrary, though appearing to have none, does in reality contain many. For instance, those who have the most faith in education and expect from it the most wonderful results, forget, in their self-gratulation on what has been achieved, how gradual and toilsome has been the process of its achievement; and flatter themselves that they may bring others to the same high attainments, without so much expense of labor and discipline. They therefore attempt to leave out of education, that very artificial training which constitutes essentially the whole of it; and at the moment when they claim to be independent of nature, come back to follow almost entirely her mere inclinations; to lean upon the experience of others, to notice merely the superficial relations of things, and to trust for knowledge to the easy process of cursory observation. Now this propensity to observe without analysis, nature provides for without any artificial aid. Indeed, it predominates in children and savages; while in its most external form, which is mere physical vision, it possesses in some beasts and birds of prey a keenness and quickness which seem almost magical. The deception may be explained, perhaps, upon the principle, that as the forms of knowledge and thought become abundant and widely diffused, they are mistaken for the reality; and imitative rehearsal of words is taken as evidence that the ideas they are intended to represent are fully comprehended. It is forgotten, that to skim the surface adroitly shows an incapacity and disrelish for looking far beneath it. That the paradoxes of truth are apparent, and those of error real, should establish in our minds the consoling conviction, that while truth is immortal, error contains the seeds of its own dissolution.

It being admitted, then, not only that authority must be recognised to exist, but also that there will be occasions for calling it into active use, we are brought at once to the evident necessity, in case of resistance or non-compliance, either of abandoning it, or providing the means of enforcing it by actual compulsion. In instances therefore, where, either from the peculiar condition of the subject, or the degree of temptation, the spirit of opposition is too strong to be overruled by those higher and more refined motives upon which we should always rely when they are active, we are left without resource unless we appeal to fear. Now the lowest kind of fear has for its object physical pain. It is this that prompts us, in the earliest stages of our development, to the use of care to protect ourselves from harm. Deprive a child of the fear of receiving injury, and, if he were allowed freedom of action, his physical existence even, would be constantly endangered. We see then how indispensable is this sentiment, at that early age, to preserve one safe till the period arrives when he will be fitted for the exercise of those of later development, and which as life advances are to connect him with higher and wider relations. In seeking to promote the welfare of a whole, we must have reference to all its parts; and if it is in its nature progressive, we must deal with each element at the proper time of its development, and to such a degree as the case demands. We must begin at the foundation and work step by step along, keeping as far as possible the end in view, but always adapting our means to present conditions. The loftiest and most beautiful edifice owes its firm and steady position to much deep and toilsome digging into the unsightly earth. In the construction of character too, we may come in contact with much that is irksome and vexatious; yet we must not pass from it slightly; it forms the basis of our future structure. Now, as in the former case the foundation-stones are more securely, as well as more easily laid, while the weight of the superstructure is not pressing upon them, so in the latter, the first principles, among which, if not beneath all, is that of subordination to authority, are more easily established, while those that are afterwards to constitute the more visible adornments, exert but little active force; here too, future beauty and usefulness depend upon a sure and good foundation. The fear of doing wrong is compatible with, if not inseparable from, the most dauntless courage to do right. Since, then, fear is most predominant in childhood, being the natural concomitant of weakness and dependence, we should take advantage of it, and make it subservient to good ends.

But if we admit the use of fear to secure obedience, we must consequently admit the use of punishment; for nothing can exist in an active state without an object upon which to act. Thus, there can be no fear of that, in the existence of which there is no belief. Here, then, we arrive conclusively at the decision of the great question at issue; namely, that the doctrine of the use of physical punishment has its foundation in nature and necessity.

Before proceeding any further, we wish, in order not to be misunderstood, to restrict the word punishment to its proper signification; namely, the legitimate infliction of a penalty for wrong-doing, with a view to promote the good, either of the individual upon whom it is inflicted, or the general good of the community of which he forms a part, and to whose welfare as a whole, his own must be, in some sense, subservient. All capricious and vindictive acts of violence, therefore, under the name of punishment, we set aside as foreign to our subject; inasmuch as they constitute the abuse, rather than the use, of what we defend.

We anticipate the most difficulty, in showing the connection that necessarily subsists between the physical and the moral; a connection which must be admitted, since we have both a physical and moral nature. So far as we have become acquainted with the objections of those who deny, in all cases, the good effects of the rod, and of course the moral right to use it, even in the family, (for there are a few such,) we have found them to contain one or both of these two general ideas ; namely, first, that mutual love is the only governing law of our nature, and therefore alone sufficient to sway any individual who has not been impregnated with evil from without ; and second, that whether our nature be originally simple, or composed of two opposite moral elements, physical compulsion not only is not immediately productive of moral obedience, but has no tendency directly or indirectly to lead to it ; in other words, that means in themselves physical cannot produce moral results. We will say no more of the palpable absurdity of denying a connection that we cannot comprehend, than to ask, if all mutual influences, both intellectual and moral, are not exerted by the mediate agency of some physical sense ? Of what use are speaking and writing and acting, if moral and intellectual impulses can as well be made without their intermediate use? We may as well abjure our physical nature at once and deny that we are in the body. But the most singular paradox, in regard to these Utopian theorists, is that they seem unconsciously to worship what they most abjure. While they profess to elevate themselves above the region of physical influences, and to scorn their control, it is this very physical organization that they appear most anxious to protect from outrage. They seem willing to forego that sound moral and intellectual training, which they so fully appreciate and so truly prize, rather than to receive it, through the degradation of that lower nature which they affect to despise. They forget that the susceptibilities of a lower nature are properly subservient to the noble purpose of developing and perfecting a higher ; the integrity of the soul is to be maintained at the expense of the suffering of the body. In thus denying the existence and use of any thing base in ourselves, we are left at last, in our efforts to maintain the purity of the whole, to identify our dignity with the most external part of our nature. We have here another instance of the self-destroying tendency of error. We see how extremes meet; and that they who seek to rise upon false principles, are sure to fall.

Punishment is of various kinds. It may be a look only; it may be a word more or less severe; or it may be a privation; or a task; or a restraint upon personal liberty; or a pecuniary forfeiture; or a blow. Whatever it be, it must be disagreeable to the receiver, in order to constitute it punishment. Being not persuasive, but compulsory and retributive, it is at first regarded and treated as an enemy; it thus finds the whole nature in a state of rebellion, and inclined to resist; consequently the infliction of the penalty is immediately followed by the vexation and chagrin arising from offended pride; the necessity of yielding; the mortification of being conquered. Thus far nothing has been done but to develop and bring to light latent evil, and reveal it more clearly to the consciousness of its possessor; but the final good is not yet attained. At length the unpleasant scene is past; the pain subsides; the blinding influence of passion ceases; the quick instinct of self-defence settles into quiet calmness; and after a hasty attempt at self-justification, succeed reflection, deliberate thought, unwonted self-examination, and finally, if all is right, conviction of wrong-doing, sincere humiliation, repentance; which is the true moral fruit. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." We see here the true moral of the scourge. We see here how one person, duly responsible for using means to advance the welfare of another beneath him, inflicts physical evil to produce moral good; the act is evil in relation to the physical nature merely, but good in relation to the moral. Now since by the law of precedence, the former is verged in the latter, the violence of the act is only apparent; it is really a moral act, as it springs from a moral motive in the doer, and aims at a moral result in the subject. It is too common to speak of corporal punishment as violence and outrage. But it is as much an abuse of language, as it would be to call it an act of outrage to rouse an invalid from a refreshing sleep, in order to save him from being consumed by the flames. A contest between two for mastery, where neither has the right to rule, is an exercise of brute force, and may properly be called violence and outrage. But the true use of the rod, so far from being similar to this, is its direct opposite. It aims to prevent violence, by teaching the necessity of subjection. Physical coercion is but the final appliance of moral suasion; a means of arousing the attention to those expostulations which should always precede, accompany, or follow it, and of thereby saving them from being disregarded.

Indeed, all government must end, if need be, in a resort to physical force. This idea is so beautifully and strongly illustrated by a writer already quoted, that we cannot refrain from borrowing his thoughts again. Mr. Abbott says,

" The government of the United States employs its hundreds of workmen at Springfield and at Harper's Ferry in the manufacture of muskets. The inspector examines every one as it is finished, with great care. He adjusts the flint — and tries it again and again until its emitted shower of sparks is of proper brilliancy, — and when satisfied that all is right, he packs it away with its thousand companions, to sleep probably in their boxes in quiet obscurity forever. A hundred thousand of these deadly instruments form a volcano of slumbering power, which never has been awakened, and which we hope never will. The government never makes use of them. One of its agents, a custom-house officer, waits upon you for the payment of a bond. He brings no musket. He keeps no troops. He comes with the gentleness and civility of a social visit. But you know, that if compliance with the just demands of your government is refused, and the resistance is sustained, force after force would be brought to bear upon you, until the whole hundred thousand muskets should speak with their united and tremendous energy. The government of these United States is thus a mighty engine, working with immense momentum, but the parts which bear upon the citizens conceal their power by the elegance of the workmanship, and by the slowness and apparent gentleness of their motion. If you yield to it, it glides smoothly and pleasantly by. If you resist it, it crushes you to atoms. Such ought to be the character of all government."

The responsibilities then, of parents, and guardians, and teachers, with such powers in their hands, are momentous. We here clothe the teacher with parental authority, not only because he stands in loco parentis by consent of law and common opinion, but because we know not how else to regard him. We admit that the teacher's authority is naturally derived from the parent. But to refer all the petty punishments of little children to the parents, besides being impracticable, would imply want of confidence in the teacher, and weaken the tie that binds him to the pupil. Moreover, without relieving the teacher, it would impose upon the parent a task that does not belong to him; and needlessly tempt the child to misrepresent his case. There is much sound philosophy in the old-fashioned threat, "If I know of your being whipped at school, I'll whip you again when you get home." This firm support of the teacher has a far better effect upon the child, than the opposite course of listening to complaints and nurturing in his mind disaffection and distrust. It begets parental interest in the teacher, and filial affection in the pupil. Teachers ought to be worthy of such support and confidence. Indeed, worthy or unworthy, we cannot help trusting them, if we commit our children to their care. They will make their own "mark upon them," if they make any, guard their influences as we may. Children will, at least so far as their own susceptibilities favor it, and to some extent despite of them, imbibe the real sentiments of their teachers. For, though like men and women they are immediately influenced and controlled by superficial manner, they have much discrimination of motive. How important, then, that both parents and teachers should be faithful and true, not only as regards instruction, but discipline; faithful to counsel, and reprove, and punish even. If a child is beset with temptation that is likely to prove too strong for him, how cruel, from indolence, or fear of offending, or a perverse and doting fondness for some mild theory, to abandon him as its victim; when a little resolute exercise of authority would restore his mind to its balance, and strengthen his power of self-control. Is our ward hungry, let us feed him; is he disconsolate and depressed, let us comfort and encourage him; is he struggling with the raging violence, or the sullen obstinacy, or the cool determination of an indomitable will, let us help him all in our power to resist and control it. As the rightful depository of authority in such a case, we are false to our trust if we do not fulfil the relation we sustain between God and our charge, and use all reasonable means in our power to inculcate the most important lesson of life. Remember the judgments that came upon Eli, "because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

In conclusion, we cannot but believe that the Hon. Secretary himself, in his zeal for a theory, is unconscious what thrusts he has made at the whole body of professional teachers; for many of his strictures are general. We do not object to a proper and dignified course of criticism, or even censure. If teachers need discipline, let them have it; if rightly received it will, according to our theory, do them good. Only let it proceed from a good motive, be properly applied, and have a worthy object. If abuses exist, let those who commit them answer for it. Let reform be attempted by representing things in their true light, without overstating them. Loose declamation and wanton ridicule have a tendency to retard rather than to help forward reform. Distorted pictures, abounding in exaggerated coloring, may indeed produce a striking effect upon the cursory observer, but they tend to mislead the mind and corrupt the taste. While teachers hold their office let them be treated with the respect that is due to the station. The tendency of undermining their authority is well set forth in the following extract from the report of the school committee of Westborough, 1838–9.

"It is a loose, or rather a false notion, respecting the authority with which the law of common sense, as well as the statute, invests the teacher, viz., an impression that he has no right to enforce obedience, — which, more often than any thing else, occasions the necessity of any violent or physical measures, to secure obedience. When the pupil, who has violated the wholesome regulations imposed upon the school, is called to account for his disobedience, he sometimes feels aggrieved and disgraced; his dignity is insulted by such an infringement of his right of self-control; and he immediately assumes the attitude of defence, and resistance of authority. He stands upon his rights, and claims the privilege of doing as he pleases in school. *He* comes to school *to learn*, not *to be governed*. Now if such a spirit of anti-government receive the countenance of — if it be not frowned upon by — the parent or guardian, the authority of the teacher is nullified, and disorder and confusion are introduced into the school. And if the teacher still asserts his authority, and because his school is but one body, claims that it shall be no monster, and therefore shall have but one *head*, he maintains authority at the expense of the love of the governed, so essential to improvement, and is denominated a *tyrant*.

"But let every child enter the school-room with the indelible impression from his parent, that the authority of the teacher is necessary, and right, and legal, and must and will be sustained; let the parent require, on pain of his own displeasure, as if he had himself been disobeyed, that his child shall submit to all the regulations of the school, and that no infraction of them can be countenanced or palliated; and this impression would forestall all necessity of that rigid, despotical authority, and those severe penalties, which, without it, are often indispensable. No teacher would maintain a despotism, but in peril of the greater evil of anarchy. But he is sometimes compelled to rule with a rod of iron, because his pupils have imbibed the notion that he has no right to rule at all.

"If a teacher abuse the authority vested in him, there is always a remedy. But to make such abuse the occasion of infusing into the mind of the child the mania of anti-government, or the idea that he may resist any authority which *he* may deem exorbitant, instead of remedying, aggravates the evil. Instead of removing abuse, it destroys all wholesome government."—*Common School Journal*, Vol. II. pp. 15, 16.

We respond heartily to such sentiments as these. There is no surer way to diminish the amount of punishment in schools, than to give countenance and support to the teacher. But we tremble for the effect of those misguided notions which make corporal punishment synonymous with brutality; the prevalence of which has sometimes been evinced in newspaper paragraphs, and placards, and petitions for restraint upon the use of the rod. We cannot but hope, however, that such scenes as have been enacted in Philadelphia will warn the public against the dreadful tendency of resisting legal force. When we once violate a principle it is impossible to know where the consequences may end.* Philadelphia, the city of Brotherly Love! how sadly has she illustrated the danger of elevating sympathy above justice. We forsake authority because we dislike its sterner aspect, and side, perhaps unconsciously, with anarchy. Rather than arm the law with executive terrors to resist and subdue the guilty, we leave to the cruel mercy of lawless violence the lives and property of the innocent. Thus, shrinking from necessary evils, we plunge into greater and worse ones which might have been shunned. Says Mr. Mann,

> "— the pensioned advocates of despotism stand, with listening ear, to catch the first sound of lawless violence that is wafted from our shores, to note the first breach of faith or act of perfidy amongst us, and to convert them into arguments against liberty and the rights of man. There is not a shout sent up by an insane mob, on this side of the Atlantic, but it is echoed by a thousand presses and by ten thousand tongues, along every mountain and valley on the other."—*Seventh Annual Report*, pp. 197, 198.

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* "A most unpleasant circumstance in the late riots at Philadelphia, was the presence of a great number of large boys, who seem to have been among the most active of the rioters. This would doubtless be the case, to a considerable extent, anywhere, but it seems to have been particularly so in Philadelphia. A curious inquiry might be made, as to how far this unpleasant circumstance was caused by the mode of discipline adopted in the public schools of that city, which, if we are rightly informed, is peculiar. We understand that no punishment is allowed in the public schools, but that the scholars who deserve it are dismissed, and thus thrown idle into the streets, unless sent by their parents to private schools. This places a mass of boys, of the most unpromising character, in the position of all others where they will be sure to grow worse, to develop their own bad propensities, and to corrupt their associates. (If we are misinformed as to the fact, some of our Philadelphia friends can correct us.")—*Providence Journal of July* 25.

What responsibilities do these thoughts suggest. How careful should men of influence be to guard against encouraging that excessive love of freedom which can brook no restraint. Those who know not how to be governed, are surely incapable of that self-government which is the very essence of freedom. If children are brought up with the notion that they are never to be restrained by force, they are in great danger of becoming the victims of lawless and ungovernable passions.

We have to say, finally, that as we came forward reluctantly to the task of publicly expressing our dissent from some of the sentiments advanced, and plans of teaching proposed by the Hon. Secretary, in his Report, we take leave of the subject with the satisfaction which springs from the consciousness of having discharged a duty which we owed alike to ourselves, to the public, and to him. Though it has cost us much time and labor, time that was due to relaxation from the severe toils of the school-room, and labor that we were ill able to bear, we shall be happy if what we have said may be humbly instrumental in advancing the important cause of SOUND POPULAR EDUCATION.

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